SPECIAL!

100 DAYS THAT CHANGED MUSIC

KURT BUYS GUN
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(SORRY, ARLO)

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK!

THE WHITE STRIPES

"PEOPLE ARE GONNA HATE ME FOR WHAT I SAY"

PLUS
T.I.
RIHANNA
KELLY CLARKSON
AND
GERARD WAY'S HIGH SCHOOL SHAME!
(P. 30)

ON THE ROAD WITH ...
HINDER
"WE'RE YOUNG AND STUPID!"

JULY 2007
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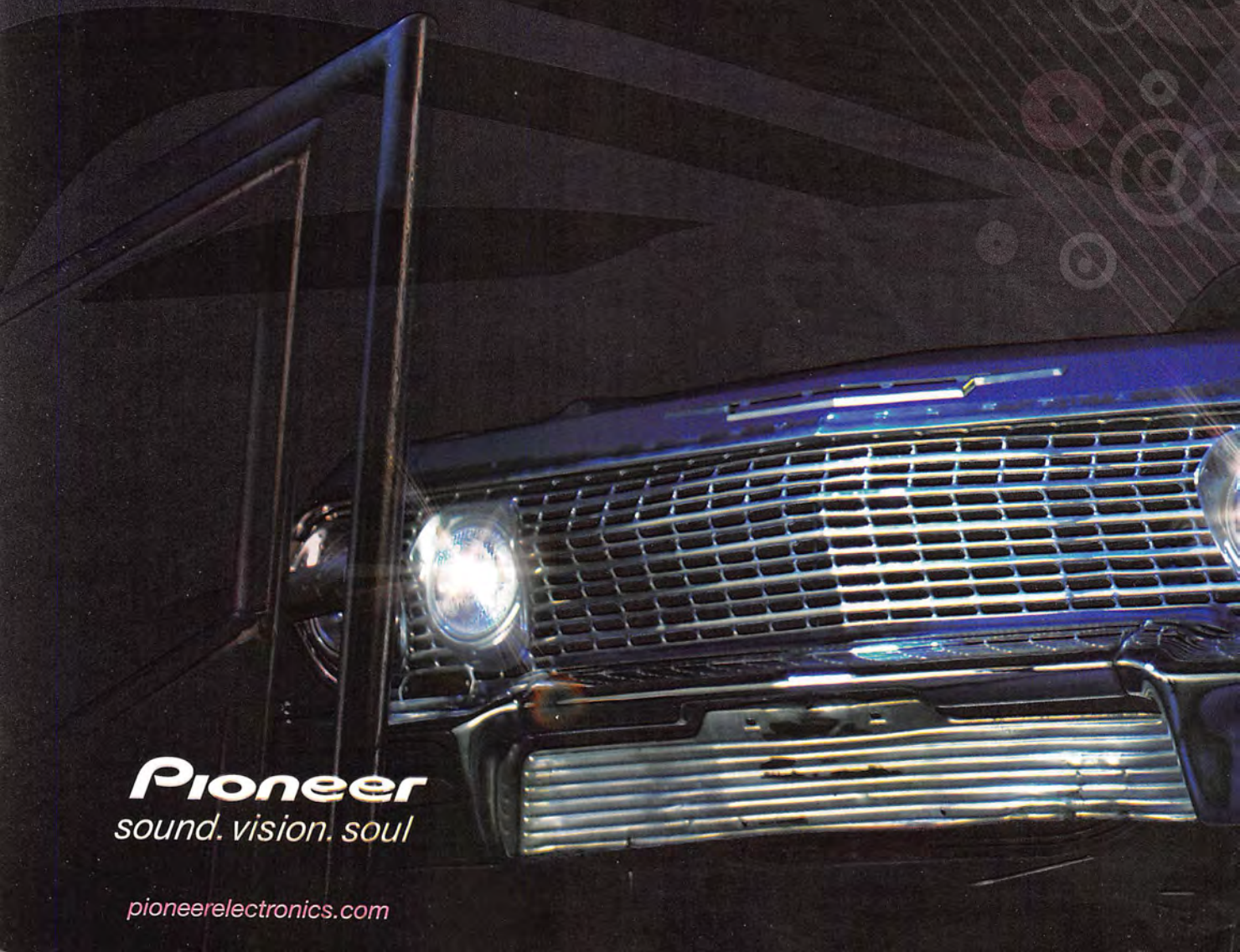

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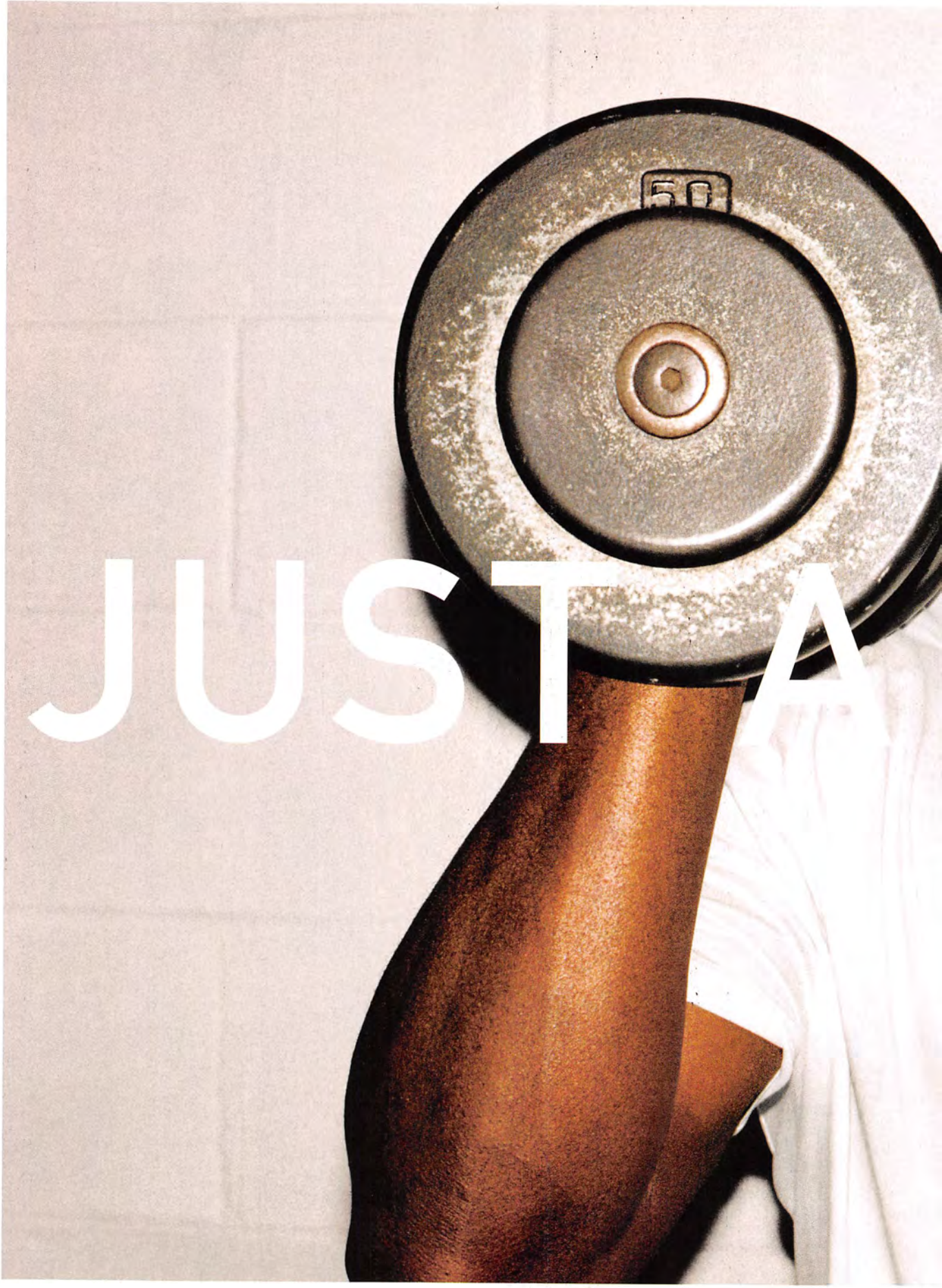
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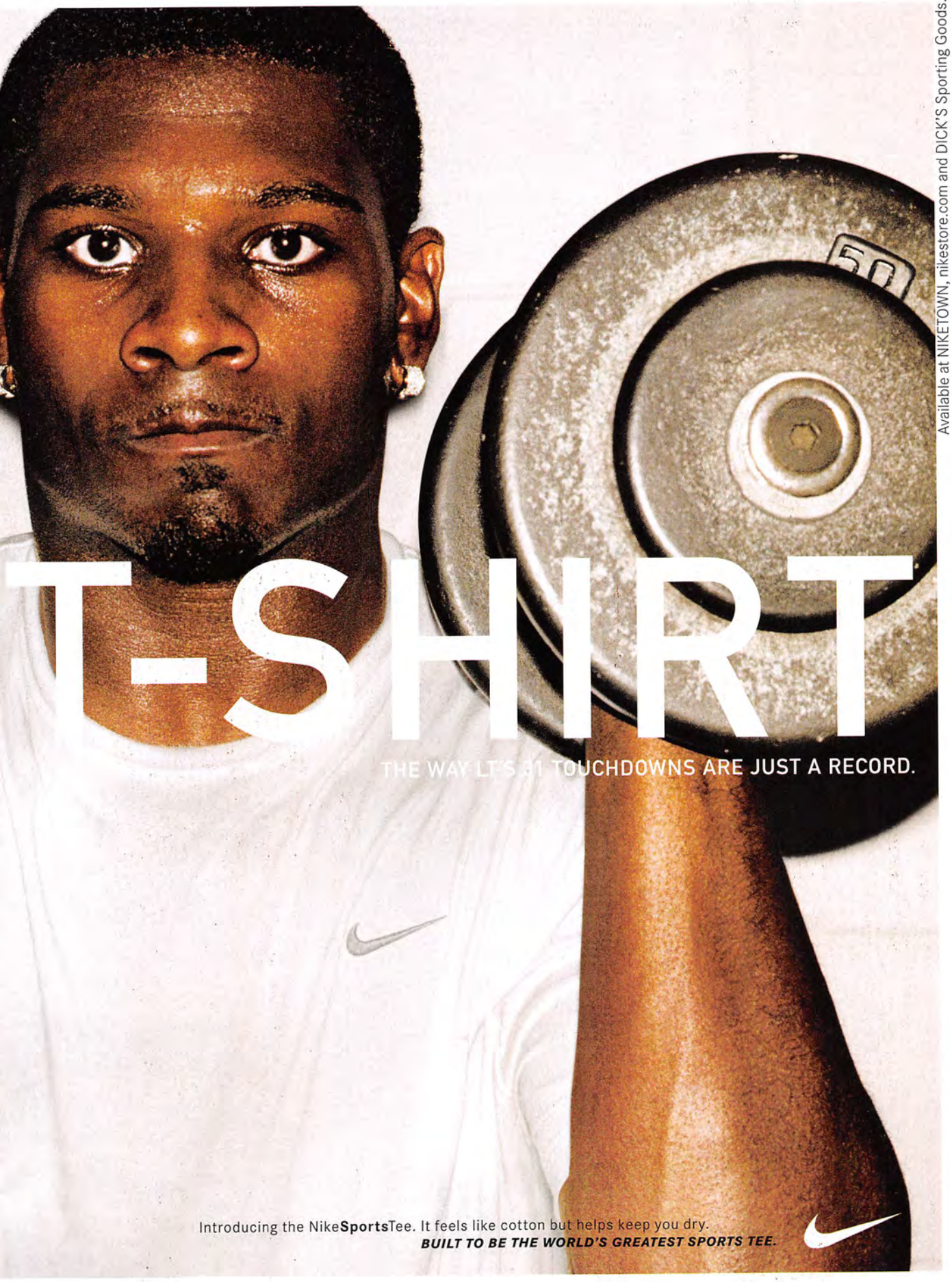
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AT YOUR SERVICE

THE BLENDER BIBLE*

INSTANT POP OMNISCIENCE, IN HANDY FOLD-OUT FORM

Download These

SONG OF THE MONTH

1 M.I.A.
"BOYZ" *INTERSCOPE*

Look at that outfit (right) and imagine it translated into sound: That's the latest mind-bender from Ms. Arulpragasam—covertly political and totally bizzonkers.

2 BJÖRK
"INNOCENCE" *ONE LITTLE INDIAN/ATLANTIC*

More airy chirpage and stunningly off-kilter beatage from Björk and Timbaland.

3 THE WHITE STRIPES
"CONQUEST" *WARNER BROS.*

A battle-of-the-sexes Patti Page cover so raucously kitschy, you can almost hear Quentin Tarantino licensing it for his next movie soundtrack.

M.I.A. PREPARES TO MATE WITH VOLTRON.

4 SWIZZ BEATZ
"MONEY IN THE BANK"
UNIVERSAL MOTOWN

The spare, screeching beat is hypnotic. The squeaky-voiced hook is addictive. The rhymes are ... well, they're in English.

5 50 CENT
"FULLY LOADED CLIP" *INTERSCOPE*

Zero candy shops here. No discos in a 50-mile radius. Just Fiddy remembering what it's like to be a scary, coke-bagging, gun-toting psychopath.

6 RILO KILEY
"MONEY MAKER"
WARNER BROS.

Redheaded indie-rock princess Jenny Lewis and her merry men return with some funky, heavy-breathing rock. Paging Karen O!

7 LIL MAMA
"LIP GLOSS" *JIVE*

There is no double meaning. There is no nuance. There is no melody. There is just a girl talking about how much she loves one particular beauty product. And it is fantastic.

8 MYA FEAT. LIL WAYNE
"LOCK U DOWN"
UNIVERSAL MOTOWN

Mya returns with a slinky personal ad (she's looking for someone to "put it on me"); in response, Wayne offers to "cuss you harder." True love!

9 THE USED
"THE BIRD AND THE WORM"
REPRISE

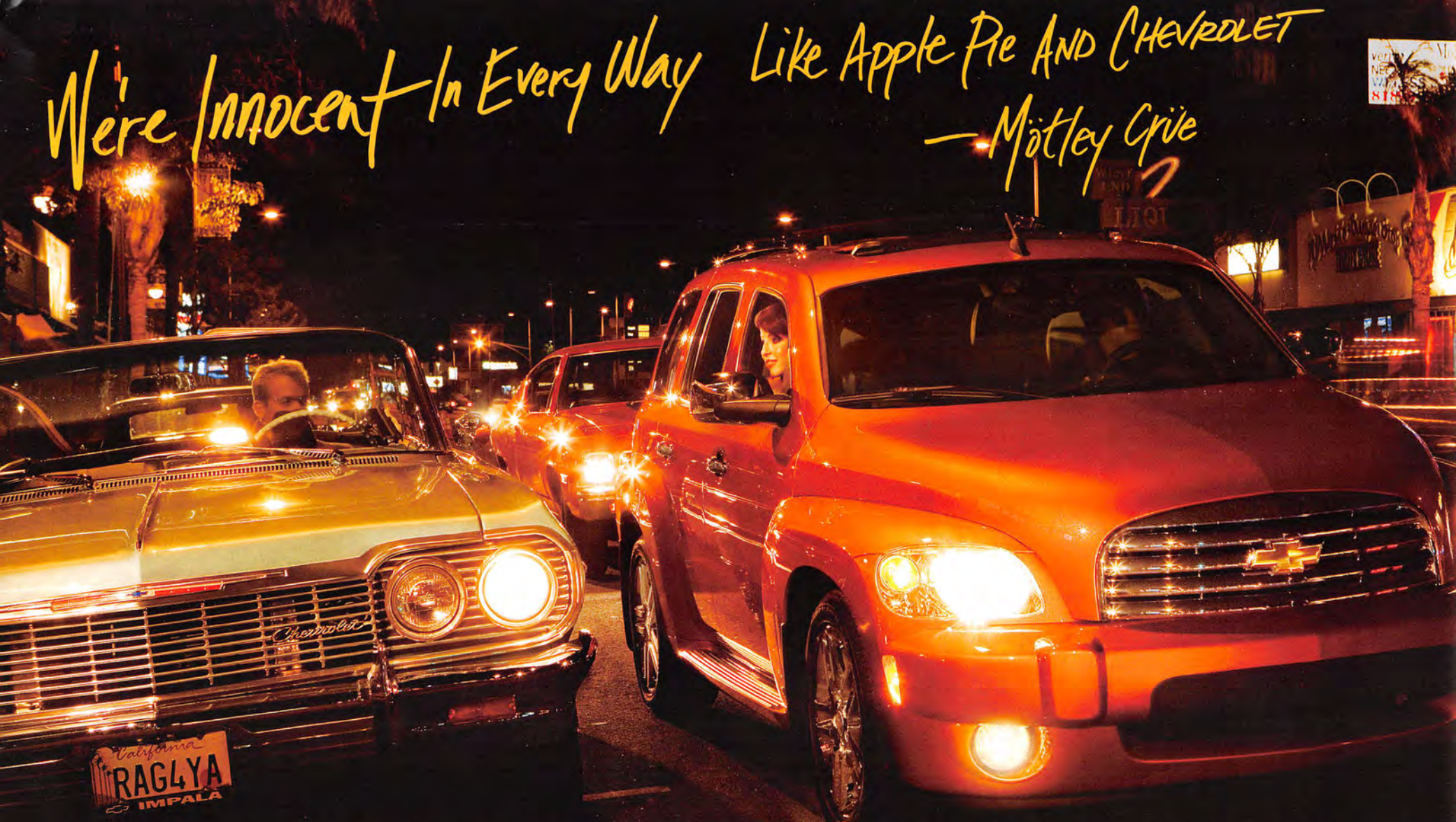
On tonight's episode of *Screamo Freak-Out Theater*: Gloom! Self-laceration! One monster hook!

10 HOT DOLLAR
"STREETS ON LOCK" *DOLLA FIGGA/ISLAND/DEF JAM*

A Jermaine Dupri–

* NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH THE REAL ONE

We're Innocent In Every Way Like Apple Pie And Chevrolet
—Mötley Crüe



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DEREK & SIMON: THE SHOW

Mr. Show vet Bob Odenkirk directs this online-only series of comedy shorts starring a couple of hapless dudes trying to get laid in L.A.

superdeluxe.com

"SHE TOTALLY WANTS ME." "TOTALLY."

CRITICAL METRICS

Geek alert! Based on tons of song recommendations from newspapers, magazines and blogs, this wonderfully anal music aggregator offers a continually updated playlist of the hottest tracks of the moment.

criticalmetrics.com

iCONCERTCAL

A free download that scours the Web and coughs out a calendar telling you when each artist in your iTunes library is playing your area next. Finally, an Internet innovation geared toward getting you *out* of the house!

iconcertcal.com

Read This

CHECK THE TECHNIQUE: LINER NOTES FOR HIP-HOP JUNKIES BY BRIAN COLEMAN *VILLARD*

Hip-hop albums typically don't have exhaustive, *Behind the Music*–style liner notes, so Coleman has taken it upon himself to conduct oral histories for 36 of the genre's classic albums from the '80s and '90s. Get making-of commentary from Run-D.M.C., Beastie Boys, Public Enemy, Wu-Tang Clan and many more.

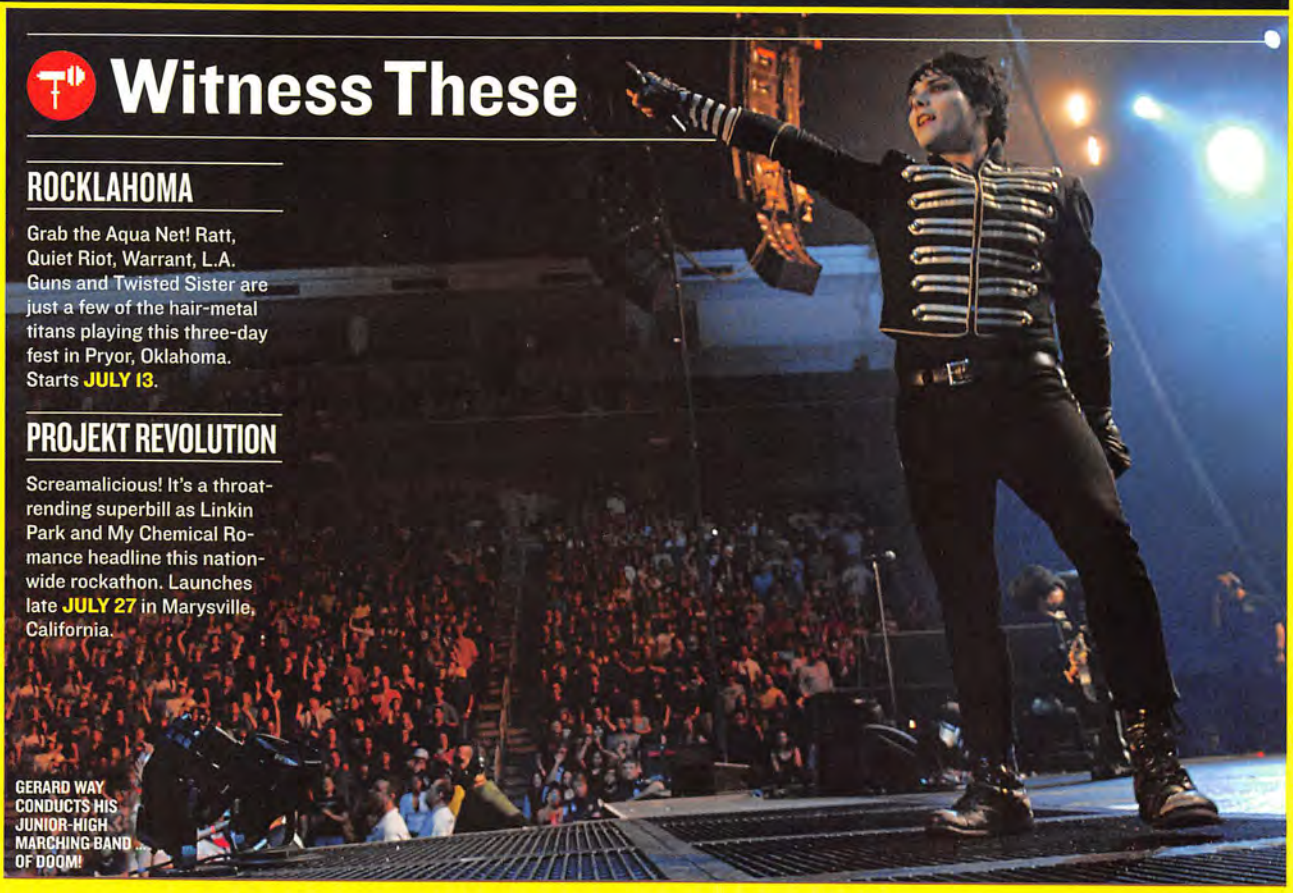
Witness These

ROCKLAHOMA

Grab the Aqua Net! Ratt, Quiet Riot, Warrant, L.A. Guns and Twisted Sister are just a few of the hair-metal titans playing this three-day fest in Pryor, Oklahoma. Starts **JULY 13**.

PROJEKT REVOLUTION

Screamalicious! It's a throat-rending superbill as Linkin Park and My Chemical Romance headline this nationwide rockathon. Launches late **JULY 27** in Marysville, California.



GERARD WAY CONDUCTS HIS JUNIOR-HIGH MARCHING BAND OF DOOM!

discovered Mississippi hard-ass likes his beats heavy and his streets locked.

11 JUSTICE
"D.A.N.C.E." *ED BANGER*

Like Daft Punk with grimier beats and no robot helmets, this Parisian duo kicks out a club jam that you can dance—and spell!—along to.

12 INTERPOL
"THE HEINRICH MANEUVER" *CAPITOL*

The miserable NYC boys return for some California dronin' on this bicoastal breakup track.

13 MARK RONSON FEAT. SANTOGOLD
"PRETTY GREEN" *RCA*

DJ to the stars Ronson enlists a hip Brooklyn duo for this bubbly, burbling Jam cover.

14 KATY PERRY
"YOU'RE SO GAY" *[ONLINE]*

A raven-haired pop-rock hottie puts self-absorbed emo dorks on notice.

15 ARCTIC MONKEYS
"FLUORESCENT ADOLESCENT" *DOMINO*

The precocious U.K. pub kids put their herky-jerky vitriol on hold for a sweetly nostalgic portrait of a party girl gone straight.

16 NE-YO
"DO YOU" *DEF JAM*

From the R&B lover-dude, a slow jam about how he's absolutely, positively not trying to break up his ex and her new fiancé.

17 THE CRIBS
"MEN'S NEEDS" *WARNER BROS.*

Hotly tipped, tightly clothed Brit rockers actually worthy of your attention.

18 DAVID BANNER FEAT. AKON, LIL WAYNE AND SNOOP DOGG
"SPEAKER" *[ONLINE]*

A clip-emptying synth banger with typically ingenious shout-outs (LeAnn Rimes? Long John Silver?!) from Young Weezy.

19 YEAH YEAH YEAHS
"SEALINGS" *WARNER BROS.*

The Brooklyn artsos wail cinematically on this slow burner from the *Spider-Man 3* soundtrack.

20 KANYE WEST
"CAN'T TELL ME NOTHIN'" *DEF JAM*

'Ye talks about being a lug-headed materialist—and feeling vaguely bad about it.

THIS PAGE: WHITE STRIPES: EDD WESTMACOTT/RETNA UK; GORE: ERIC CHARBONNEAU/WIREIMAGE; MADONNA: TONY BARSON/WIREIMAGE; BOND: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE. OPPOSITE: *DEREK & SIMON: SUPERDELUXE.COM; MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE: CHRIS MCKAY/WIREIMAGE.*

Spin These

1 THE WHITE STRIPES
ICKY THUMP *WARNER BROS.*

What's this? Trumpets? Bagpipes? Jokes? Jack White continues to break his own rules—and the result is wacky, rawking fun.

2 BIG & RICH
BETWEEN RAISING HELL AND AMAZING GRACE *WARNER BROS. NASHVILLE*

Prankish country meant for arenas, complete with hair-metal guitars and tailgate-party lyrics.

3 R. KELLY
DOUBLE UP *JIVE*

Hasn't this guy been awaiting trial for a zillion years? Lucky for us, infinite legal delays mean yet another buoyant set of oddball sex jams (cf. "Sex Planet").

JACK WHITE ROCKS PLYMOUTH COLONY.

4 AGAINST ME!
NEW WAVE *SIRE*

"Protest songs! In response to military aggression!" doesn't sound like an infectious hook—but these Florida punks make politics sing.

5 RIHANNA
GOOD GIRL GONE BAD *DEF JAM*

In which a modestly voiced R&B starlet transforms into a scenery-chewing dance-floor destroyer.

Watch These

"WHAT RHYMES WITH 'GREENHOUSE GASES'?"

MOVIE

BLACK SHEEP

New Zealand's cult horror-comedy dares to ask the question, What happens when man attempts to genetically manufacture "perfect" sheep? The answer: killer mutant livestock that can turn people into sheep-wolves, naturally! Opens June 22.

TV

LIVE EARTH

On July 7, **AL GORE** and his musician pals—from U2 to **MADONNA**—stick it to global warming with consciousness-raising concerts on all seven continents. If watching live Web casts (*liveearth.msn.com*) all day long sounds too trying, catch three hours of highlights on NBC beginning at 8 P.M. EST.

DVD

BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN WITH THE SESSIONS BAND LIVE IN DUBLIN

Playing to a raucous Irish crowd well versed in age-old sing-alongs, the Boss and his 17-strong Sessions band turn the traditional blues, gospel and folk found on last year's *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions* album into stadium-worthy anthems.

ONLINE

THE (TINY) HOLD STEADY

What could be better than an official video for the Hold Steady's classic-rock romp "Stuck Between Stations?" A fan-made video for the Hold Steady's "Stuck Between Stations" starring three-inch-tall clay replicas of the band, of course! Search: "Untucked Films" + "Hold Steady."

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66 THE WHITE STRIPES
After his fellow Detroit garage-rock scenesters turned on him, Jack White made a dramatic life choice—to abandon the Motor City for Music City. The result? A fitter, happier Jack—and another instant-classic White Stripes album.

74 MANDY MOORE
Now 23, teen-pop star turned actress Mandy Moore has morphed into a mature singer-songwriter on her Starbucks-friendly new album. Brace yourself for songs about bitter breakups and making love on the floor.

80 100 DAYS THAT CHANGED MUSIC
The Beatles smoke pot for the first time. Jerry Lee Lewis marries his 13-year-old cousin. The iPod is unveiled. Justin and Britney split. Plus, the 96 other earth- (and ear-) shattering events that changed music forever.

100 J.R. ROTEM
Meet pop's new superproducer. 50 Cent and Rihanna have him on speed dial. He's a ladies' man. So why can't he enjoy himself?

TUNE IN!
BE SURE TO LISTEN TO
THE BLENDER DOWNLOAD 15
SATURDAYS AT 12 P.M. EST
ON
MAXIM RADIO, CHANNEL 108 ON SIRIUS.

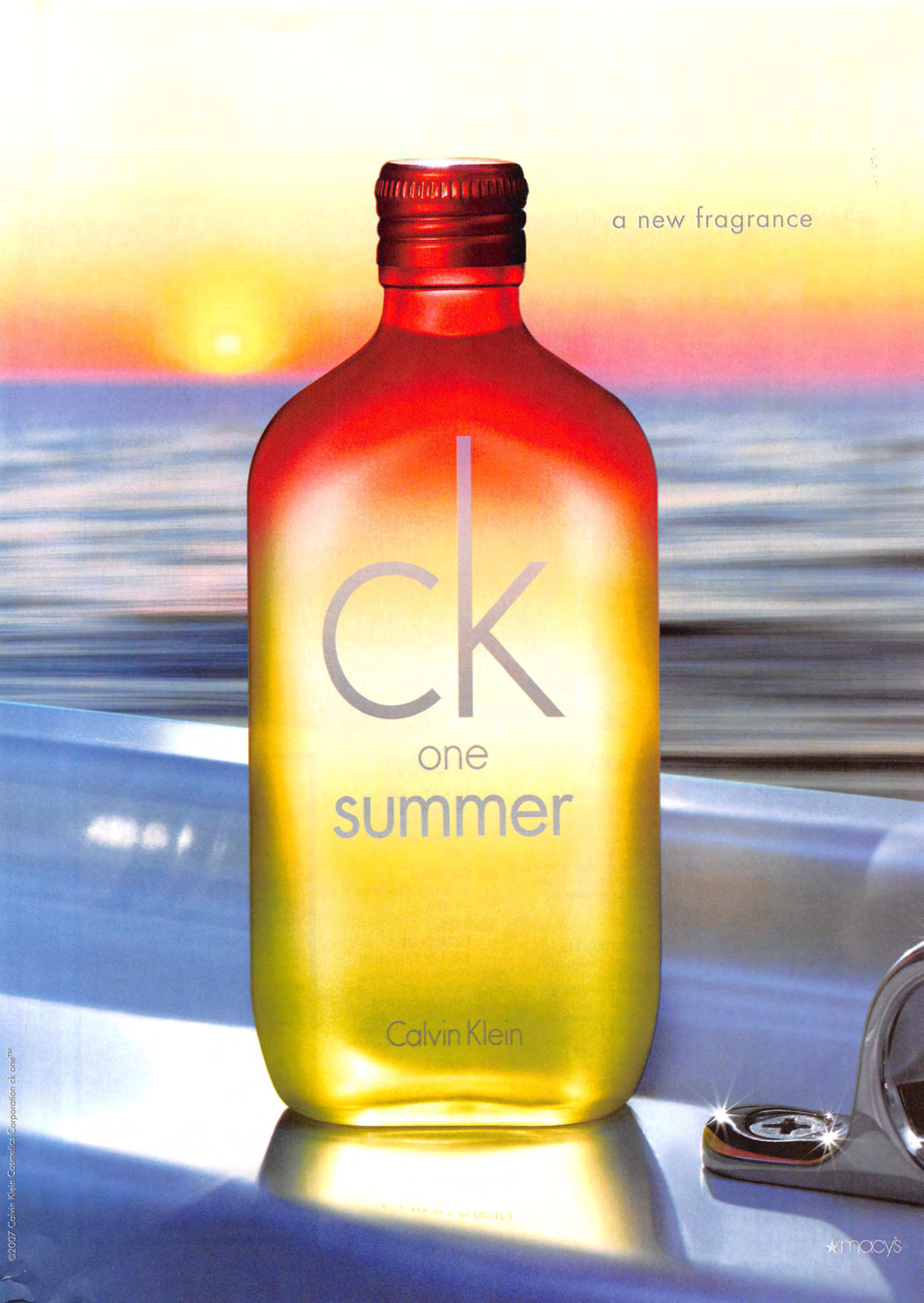
88

> ON THE COVER
THE WHITE STRIPES
PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIELLE LEVITT
Styling: Marjan Malakpour for Margaret Maldonado. Grooming: Megan Thompson for Max Art Creative. Prop styling: Ruby Guidara. Clothing: On Jack, Jeans: Scout Jeans. Jacket and T-shirt: his own. On Meg, Jacket: Elise Overland NY. T-shirt: Evidence of Evolution at Max Field LA. Jeans: Radcliffe. Shoes: YSL.

66

"I'M NOT A PART OF THE HIPSTER UNDERGROUND ANYMORE."
JACK WHITE

WHITE STRIPES: BARNEY SMITH/RETNA UK; SEX PISTOLS: RAY STEVENSON/RETNA UK; MADONNA: DAVID MEGOUGH/DMI/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES. COVER: KURT COBAIN: JESSE FROHMAN/CORBIS OUTLINE; HINDER: SCOGIN MAYO. ALTERNATE COVER ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: IMUS: PETER KRAMER/GETTY IMAGES; MANDY MOORE: PAUL MOONCE/CORBIS; BOBBY "BONS" PICKETT (SPINE): DAVID LIVINGSTON/WFNN/WFNX/ZIM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The Canadian crooner on penis reduction and his secret drug habit

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The Atlanta rapper gives detailed instructions on making a jailhouse weapon and reveals the most evil thing he's ever done.

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Inspired by "extra-terrestrials and subterranean worlds," Afrika Bambaataa pioneered the electro sound.

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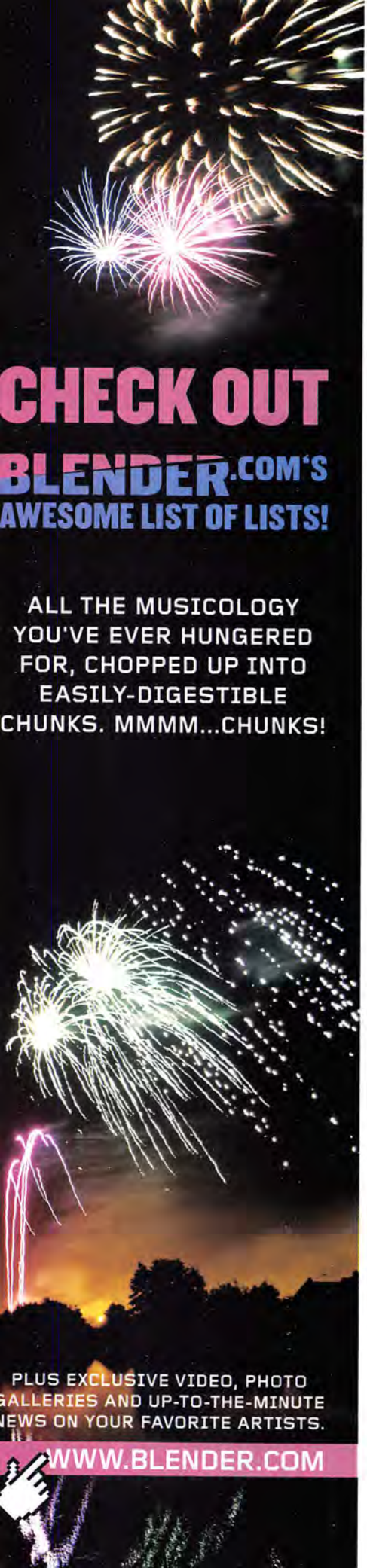

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YOU'VE GOT MAIL

BECAUSE SHARING IS CARING ...

The Best Damn Cover

I don't know how much liquor you had to ply her with, but thank you, *Blender*, for getting Avril Lavigne ("Wild Thing," June) to pose topless for your June cover. I always thought of Avril as the bratty younger-sister type, but after seeing your revealing photos of her, I have to say: Man, she's smoking hot! Damn you, Deryck Whibley—you're one lucky bastard.

Ben T., Paris, TX

(Mall) Punk in Drublic

For someone who claims to drink only "in moderation" now, Avril Lavigne sure spends a lot of time downing J.D. and talking about getting fucked up. Hopefully when she picked up the issue with her on the cover, she took some time to read your "Let's Go Rehab!" story.

M. Wallace, Milford, CT

Swimsuit Issues

What is it with you guys and disturbing photos of musicians frolicking on the beach? In June's Burner section you ran a picture of Fat Joe's ass crack, followed two pages later by shots of Courtney Love's gross-looking stomach. I'm going to have to remember not to eat lunch right before reading *Blender* anymore.

Orlando Bowers, Phoenix

In that case, you might want to skip next month's poolside pictorial of the roadies of Ozzfest.

Lavigne: "Hey, buddy, my heavily made-up eyes are up here."

A Vote Against Linkin

Teenage angst has paid off well for Linkin Park ("Second Life," June), so why change the formula? If I wanted to hear rap-free songs about Hurricane Katrina and the Iraq war, I'd listen to U2. Bring back the Linkin Park of *Hybrid Theory*! Don't be ashamed of your nü-metal past, dudes!

Ross Delacorte, Denver

Indiscretion Guaranteed

Kudos to Maroon 5 singer Adam Levine (Dear Superstar, June) for being gentleman enough to not reveal what bases he may or may not have gotten to with Paris Hilton, Jessica Simpson, Maria Sharapova and Natalie Portman. If I as much as held hands with one of those hotties, I'd be renting a skywriting plane to spell out my accomplishment to the world.

Paul Edmonds, Victoria, British Columbia

Urine Trouble

My live-in girlfriend is always complaining that I leave the toilet seat up. That's why I was so intrigued when I read about the Flipper—the toilet-seat-lifting foot pedal that ensures that the seat always comes down—in your story on Fountains of Wayne ("$848 With Fountains of Wayne," June). Where can I get one of these ingenious devices? Please, my relationship depends on it!

Jay Halstead, Madison, WI

The Flipper can be purchased at *dansallc.com*. Alternately, a less demanding girlfriend can be found at *match.com*.

Open Mouth, Insert Foot

As a longtime foot worshipper—I love >>

If Pop Stars Were Dogs ...

Send us a photo and tell us which music celebrity your pooch resembles. If we print it, you'll win the awesome Cerwin Vega CVHD Home Entertainment Speaker System.

TRAVIS BARKER the pop star

LITTLE BEAR the dog

LAVIGNE: SIMON EMMETT; BARKER: MARK SELIGMAN/MIGHTY

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When mint and a hint of fruit come together, things get interesting.

ACTIVATE YOUR AWESOME

Rihanna, as seen in the *Better Homes and Gardens* swimsuit edition.

nothing more than to suck on a woman's toes—I was glad to see Redman making it known in the pages of your magazine (Useful Tips, June) that he, too, has a foot fetish. The more people talk about their kinks, the more acceptable they'll become. Just don't start running advice from rock stars on how to dress up in diapers—now that shit's sick!

ToeLover23, Andover, MA

Fishy Story

I was interested to learn that Rihanna has an irrational fear of fish, even tiny ones ("The Blender Summer Sweat-Tacular," June). I used to suffer from ichthyophobia, too. I'd be willing to show Rihanna how to get over her fear, but it would require hours of intense one-on-one sessions in the ocean—and she'd definitely have to wear one of the bikinis she sported in your photos.

James M., Ardmore, PA

Sorry, Rihanna also has a deathly fear of creepy come-ons from magazine readers.

Point: The Osbournes Rule

Whenever I go on a double date, the other couple always ends up being some boring woman my wife met at knitting class and her equally dull accountant husband. That's why I'm so jealous that *Blender* got to go out with Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne ("Rock-Star Double Date," June). Though, those two are so freaking hilarious, I don't think I'd be able to stop laughing long enough to get any food into my mouth.

Jake Walker, Orlando, FL

Counterpoint: The Osbournes Suck

Mad props to Josh Homme ("The Blender Summer Sweat-Tacular") for having the balls to call out Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne for the way they treat the musicians who play Ozzfest. With everyone stealing their music, bands today make little enough cash as it is. Asking them to play Ozzfest for free is absolutely criminal!

Kim Kelley, Bellville, OH

School of Rock

I'm going into my junior year at a prestigious college, but I haven't learned as much in one sitting in the last two years as I did taking "The Ultimate Rock & Roll Quiz" (June). Now I know at what age Marilyn Manson lost his virginity, how much Izzy Stradlin was fined for peeing in the aisle of a US Airways flight and what happened to the sculpture of Lionel Richie's head from the "Hello" video. Think my academic adviser will let me switch my major from poli-sci to rock trivia?

J. Nadler, Boston, MA

Probably not. But feel free to call us if you need help in your Political Economy of Reform in Post-Mao China class.

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"There was nothing we couldn't stand."

ALEX TURNER, ARCTIC MONKEYS

Jarvis Cocker: Pop stars—they're just like us. They levitate!

ARCADE FIRE! BJÖRK! SCARLETT JOHANSSON!

Happy Valley

Three days, 122 bands, 105 degrees and 30,000 miniskirts. The COACHELLA VALLEY MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL turned the desert into California's coolest VIP club

IT WAS NEARLY midnight on April 29, the third and final day of the Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival, and for the first time all weekend, the security guards looked nervous. The recently reunited **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE** were making their debut after a seven-year hiatus, and 60,000 fans stood riveted to the band's Commie agitation bombs. With a huge red-and-black Zapatista flag hanging behind the band and a full moon hanging in the desert sky, prodigal frontman Zack de la Rocha prowled the stage, trying to stir dissatisfaction into action. "The Bush administration should be hung, tried and shot!" he growled, and the crowd roared its assent.

But the cops needn't have worried. If this was a riot, it was the most courteous one in history. Giggling toddlers mingled peaceably with Mohawked headbangers. Even the mosh pit looked like nothing more than a rambunctious game of Ring Around the Rosie. "Fuck you, I won't do what you tell me"? More like, "Pardon me, I may have stepped on your Teva en route to buying a veggie burger." Who knew revolution could be so polite?

For eight years, Coachella has provided proof that rock shows don't have to be overpriced crushes of sweaty, mud-caked nastiness. Making its debut only weeks after the horrifyingly violent debacle of Woodstock '99, Coachella took all the stuff that makes fests suck—rancid Porta-Potties, nine-dollar water, drum circles—and ditched it in favor of comfort and civility. For a weekend every spring, the coolest names in music converge on this sun-baked polo field in the mountainous Sonoran Desert, providing a homegrown answer to U.K. love-ins like Glastonbury and Reading, and spawning a new generation of American imitators, like the U.S. Virgin Festival, Austin City Limits Music Fest and Bonnaroo.

With the festivities expanded to include a third day and passes selling out almost immediately, this was Coachella's biggest year yet. For the better part of a decade, this kinder, gentler rock blowout has kept hope alive for a smarter, fringier side of '90s music—privileging techno, indie rock, arty metal, post-Radiohead Brit bands and the kind of once-famous acts that used to headline Lollapalooza. Lately the fest has downplayed its rave-y roots, upping the indie rock and assuming an almost Sundance-like cachet as a staging ground for the most fashionable new artists (Gnarls Barkley and Arcade Fire both had major coming-out parties here). But it has also maintained a sense of haute history, via performances by gods of MTV's *120 Minutes* era like the Pixies and the Cure.

At Coachella, the elite audience's pride in its own taste blossoms into frothy praise for nearly every act on the carefully curated bill. "There was nothing we couldn't stand," **ARCTIC MONKEYS** singer Alex Turner told *Blender*—which, for a laconic English >>

Amy Winehouse really sells her "I just flew in from London and boy are my arms tired" joke.

Jim Reid of the Jesus and Mary Chain scans the crowd for anyone pastier than him.

Arcade Fire's Win Butler: Relieved to have left his DayGlo voodoo shirt at home.

Björk: "No missionaries were harmed in the making of this outfit."

COACHELLA AT A GLANCE

WHY SCHLEP TO THE DESERT? *BLENDER* SUMS UP THREE DAYS OF MUSIC GLORY IN 120 WORDS

HIGHEST TEMPERATURE: 105 degrees

MOST IMPRESSIVE VIP: LINDSAY LOHAN

DRUNKEST VIP: Tara Reid

RANDOMEST VIP: Corbin Bernsen

VIP WHO WAS NOT ACTUALLY A VIP: The bald girl everyone thought was Britney Spears

TIME IT TOOK SOMEONE TO OFFER US "TASTY GANJA TREATS" IN RICE KRISPIES FORM: Approximately three minutes

SNARKIEST T-SHIRT: EVERYTHING YOU LIKE, I LIKED FIVE YEARS AGO

CLEAREST SIGN WE'RE IN CALIFORNIA: The line for six-dollar organic smoothies was longer than the one for beer

"DANCE-MUSIC LEGEND" WE COULDN'T FIND TIME TO SEE: All of them

WORST COVER: The ROOTS' 13-minute reworking of Bob Dylan's "Masters of War," sung to the tune of "The Star-Spangled Banner"

BEST PSYCHEDELIC ISRAELI TRANCE DUO: Infected Mushroom

TOTAL MAN-HOURS OF MUSIC: 105

pub kid, constitutes a surprisingly ringing endorsement.

That generosity was on display all weekend long. "I'm not this big!" protested waifish British soul hottie **AMY WINEHOUSE** in near shock as she surveyed the ecstatic thousands crammed in for her Friday-afternoon set. Fellow Brit babe **LILY ALLEN**, meanwhile—though adorable in a white party dress—struggled through her salty tunes of London-girl disaffection. But when she apologized for singing off-key, the crowd went bananas anyway.

The opening night's headliner, **BJÖRK**, may be the embodiment of Coachella's anything-goes spirit. A futuristic faerie dressed like a giant Little Debbie snack cake, she set the tone for the weekend with her whacked-out enthusiasm. Indie-pop freaks **OF MONTREAL** rose to the challenge, looking like gay elves as they knocked out giddy new-wave disco songs in a whir of painted faces, spandex pants and pink angel wings. The **DECEMBERISTS**' Colin Meloy was more adult in a natty seersucker suit, but his literate, flouncy band also flirted with kiddie theater, as beefy guitarist Chris Funk lunged at audience members while wearing a goofy whale costume.

Other acts were weird in more conventional ways. **ANDREW BIRD** showed off his skills as an indie-rock multitasker, switching between guitar, violin and xylophone, sometimes midsong. **KLAXONS** brought their much-hyped British "new rave" with rowdy alt-rock songs punctuated by air-raid sirens. And superhip Brazilian electro-rockers **CSS** enjoyed the odd thrill of playing their unironic summer jam "Paris Hilton" five minutes after meeting the song's titular heroine backstage.

Hilton was everywhere this year: bobbing her head to New York gloom merchants **INTERPOL**; dancing onstage with hipster mash-up king **GIRL TALK**; snapping photos of French electronica duo **AIR**. Coachella has always been a favorite getaway for young Hollywood (shaggy-boy rock stars + a half-hour flight from LAX + 72 hours to work on your tan = starlets galore), but 2007 seemed to be an A-list tipping point. Drew Barrymore took in a smoldering Saturday-afternoon set by **KINGS OF LEON**; Cameron Diaz scoped out Pulp singer **JARVIS COCKER**; Kate Hudson and Jessica Alba shared VIP space with a gaggle of Victoria's Secret models. Even the dust-covered campgrounds were glamorous, as fresh-faced girls who hadn't showered in three days still managed to get cuted-up in sundresses and kitten heels. It was >>

WINEHOUSE: BARRY BRECHESEN; REID: ZACH CORDNER; ARCADE FIRE: KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES; BJÖRK: BRANIMIR KVARTUC/AP PHOTO; DANCERS: BRANIMIR KVARTUC/AP PHOTO; CROWD: ZACH CORDNER; BARRYMORE: JAMIE MCCARTHY/WIREIMAGE; HILTON: JOHN SHEARER/WIREIMAGE; DIAZ: LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE; LOHAN: JIM SPELLMAN/WIREIMAGE; CSS: [illegible]

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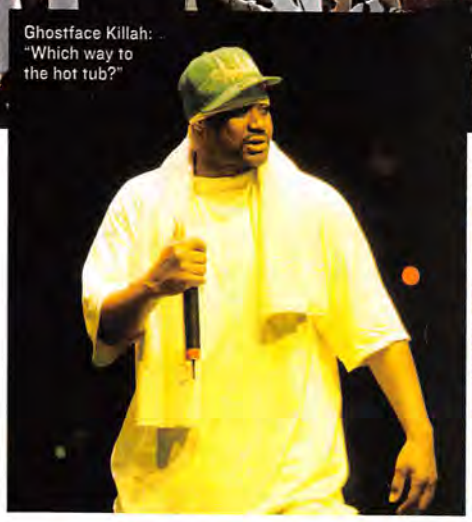
Hey, Of Montreal: Scissor Sisters called—they want their shtick back.



Ghostface Killah: "Which way to the hot tub?"

Rage Against the Machine: Available for weddings, bar mitzvahs, Black Panther Party BBQs.

Kimberly Stewart and Courtney Love discuss spirituality, their carbon footprints, lip gloss.

Anthony Kiedis: Keynote speaker at the Tom Selleck Fan Club convention.

like an episode of *Entourage* come to life and multiplied by 60,000. Ten years ago, a frumpy guitar band like **SILVERSUN PICKUPS** or aggro-punks like **AGAINST ME!** were strictly for the unwanted and the bitter; here, they rocked the beautiful people.

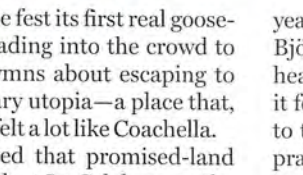
"The natural inclination of indie rockers is to say, 'Oh, Lindsay Lohan's here, this party's over,'" said James Murphy of **LCD SOUNDSYSTEM**. "Dude, there was never a party for you. There was a bunch of lonely dudes standing around with their arms folded, staring at each other. Coachella had party people, and I'm down with that."

One celeb even quietly got into the action. The weekend's second-biggest reunion, a winning set by Scottish feedback heroes **THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN**—surprising, given their acrimonious split just eight years ago—turned even stranger when Scarlett Johansson sidled onstage, lent some nasally harmonies to "Just Like Honey" (which had soundtracked the credits to *Lost in Translation*) and disappeared without a word. **ARCADE FIRE**, meanwhile, didn't need any help making noise. Revisiting the scene of their star-making 2005 turn, the 10-piece Canadian crew took the main stage Saturday night bathed in neon, with Lohan watching from the wings. As a pipe organ boomed and spotlights arced overhead like cathedral spires, Win Butler gave the fest its first real goosebump moment, wading into the crowd to deliver his epic hymns about escaping to some half-imaginary utopia—a place that, for a few minutes, felt a lot like Coachella.

No one radiated that promised-land vibe more than resident So-Cal shamans the **RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS**. A quarter-century into their career, they were by far the weekend's biggest draw—the quintessential L.A. act for the quintessential L.A. crowd. Not even Anthony Kiedis's *To Catch a Predator* mustache could derail the band's freak-funk hit parade; and guitarist John Frusciante kept fans rapt with a gorgeous falsetto take on "Songbird," by fellow Californicators Fleetwood Mac.

It might seem strange that this year's big-timers were all old-timers—Björk, the Chili Peppers and Rage had headlined in previous years—and at times it felt like we'd all been time-warped back to the Clinton administration, when we'd pray the VCR taped *Party of Five*. But this is a festival that has always advocated recycling, and after almost 10 years of getting bigger and more mainstream without sacrificing its adventurous edge, a little *Now That's What I Call Coachella!* back-patting felt well earned.

And fittingly, many of the most triumphant moments came from '90s acts. **GHOSTFACE KILLAH**, thug-casual in a white tee and shorts, brought a bevy of hotties onstage to shake their shit to some old Wu-Tang hits. On the same stage, **SONIC YOUTH** proved themselves still the coolest jam band on earth, careening their epic, spacey noise off the palm trees as Kim Gordon (still fit in her 50s) flayed her guitar and bounced like a teenager. And Jarvis Cocker hadn't seemed so on point since the mid-'90s heyday of his band Pulp. Drolly cool and devilishly funny, he finished with a piano-bar anthem that claimed "cunts are still running the world": a surefire crowd-pleaser for a self-congratulatory crowd—and a great song for Rage to cover if their reunion leads to an album. *Jon Dolan and Josh Eells*



It was like an episode of *Entourage* come to life and multiplied by 60,000.

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> POP-STAR MUST-HAVE

WIGS!

Continuing the tranny style trend, celebs sport fierce synthetic mops

BRITNEY SPEARS

BEYONCÉ KNOWLES

LILY ALLEN

PATTI LABELLE

NEWS ROUNDUP

STING and wife, Trudie Styler, lost a discrimination case against their cook, who claimed she was fired because she was pregnant. Chef Jane Martin said Styler made her work long hours and became angry when she took sick time.

The city of Berlin is renaming Street Number 13 in honor of **FRANK ZAPPA**. "Frank-Zappa-strasse" will be the first street in Germany named for a rock musician and the first street in a capital city named for Zappa.

BOY GEORGE was arrested in London on a charge of false imprisonment. The Culture Club singer and another man allegedly handcuffed Auden Carlsen to a hook on the wall of Boy George's house. Carlsen claims the pair had promised to photograph him.

WORD!

"I AM REPULSED BY IT."

TRENT REZNOR ON THE HOLLYWOOD SCENE

GEEK ALERT #7

Welcome to the Dork Parade: Gerard Way (top) and his brother Mikey.

UNGOTHLY

MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE's Gerard and Mikey Way scrubbed up nice as teenagers

NEW JERSEY SONS My Chemical Romance have frequently portrayed themselves as former teenage outcasts, but recently unearthed photos of frontman Gerard Way and his brother, bassist Mikey Way, from their Belleville High School yearbook suggest a surprising bent toward suburban conformity.

Gerard's 1995 senior photo shows him as a chubby-cheeked teen sporting a blazer, a tie and a seemingly untroubled visage. His hair, recently platinum blond, is brown and parted down the center in the adolescent version. Mikey, too, sports a blazer, tie and center part in his senior photo three years later. The band will tour with Linkin Park as part of the Projekt Revolution Tour this summer but could be without Mikey, who is on hiatus from the band after getting married. *David Peisner*

Beth Ditto: "Mmm ... sole food."

BIGFOOT

GOSSIP singer snacks on her toes in New York

During Gossip's April show at the New York weekly hipster soiree MisShapes, singer Beth Ditto caught the attention of even the most jaded scenesters by posing with her foot in her mouth. Sporting a skintight gold dress and a makeup job that'd do Tammy Faye proud, Ditto shed the dress during her performance, finishing with only a black bra and underwear covering her ample frame. "My favorite thing is how shocked or disgusted the skinny hipsters were," Ditto told *Blender*. "It's called *fun*! Get your nose out of famous people's asses and try it sometime!" *David Peisner*

SPEARS: RAMEY PHOTO; KNOWLES: JEFFREY MAYER/WIREIMAGE; ALLEN: MATT SYMONS/PACIFIC COAST NEWS; LABELLE: JOSEPH MARZULLO/RETNA; YEARBOOK PHOTOS (2): GRAEME MASSIE/SPLASH NEWS; GERARD WAY INSET: TED MURPHY/MEDIAPRESS; CHORUS: SCOTT LAUGHLIN; OTHERS: ESTUARY PHOTO/WIREIMAGE

 "I wanna go home/I don't wanna stay/Give up education/As a bad mistake."

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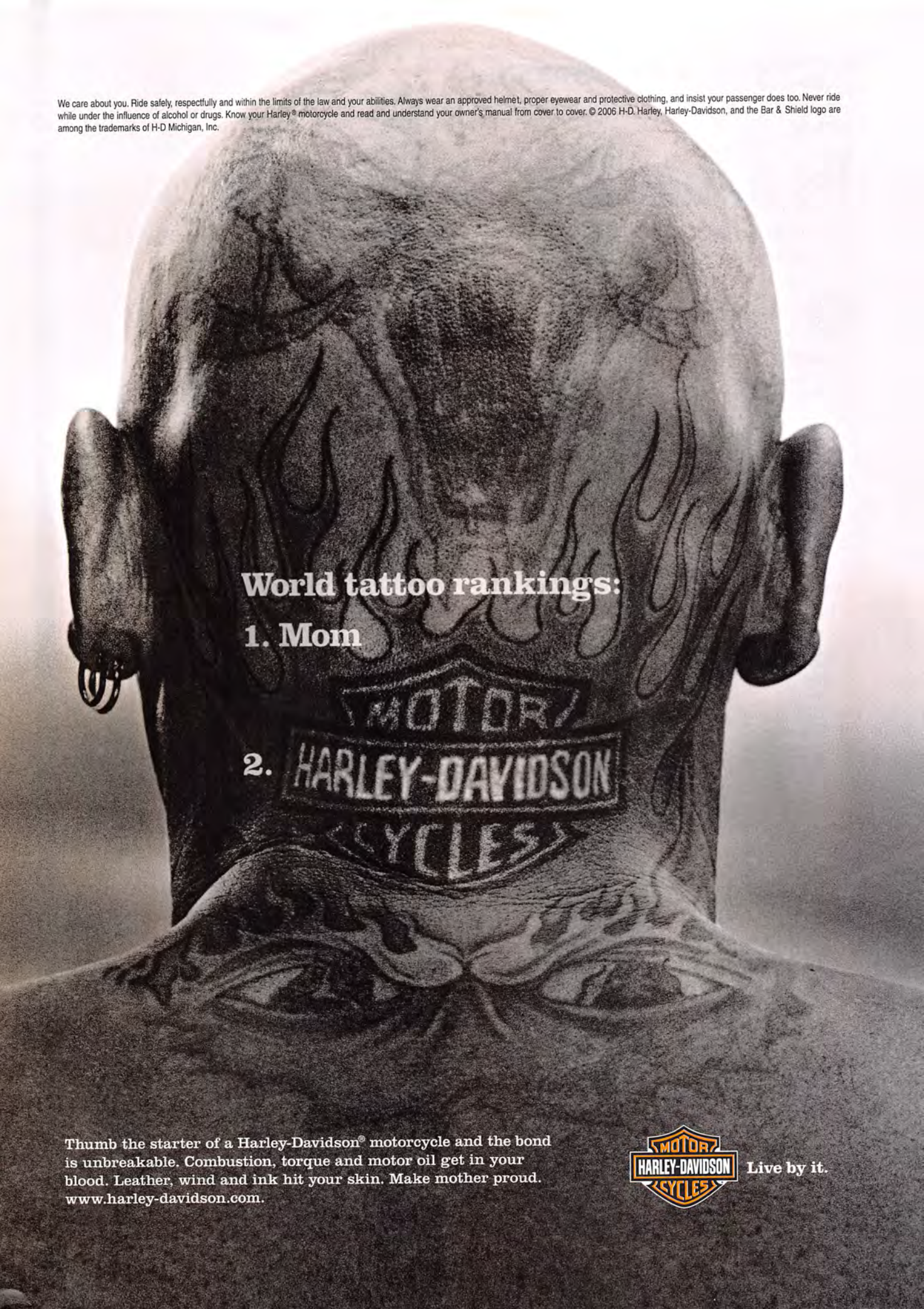

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HOW TO ...

Be a Gas-Station Gourmet

Alt-hip-hoppers **GYM CLASS HEROES** share tour-tested tips for prepping the perfect roadside repast

BY MARK YARM // PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER YANG

1 ECONOMIZE

TRAVIS McCOY, *vocals*
"When we started touring, we'd buy expensive shit, but you can get more for your money at a gas station. For nachos, take Cool Ranch Doritos, add Philadelphia cream cheese and salsa, then microwave. It's the craziest taste your tongue will ever come in contact with. It's like Napoleon Dynamite's dance—in your mouth."

2 IMPROVISE

MATT McGINLEY, *drums*
"Domino's will not deliver to you while you're on a road trip—I've tried. So you gotta work with what you're given. I buy a Celeste cheese pizza and microwave it for about two minutes. Then I top it with Dole pineapple chunks from a can and the ham from Lunchables. You've made the ghetto gas-station Hawaiian pizza."

3 MAXIMIZE

DISASHI LUMUMBA-KASONGO, *guitar*
"The key is to feel as full as you can with as little food as possible. First, cook some microwavable macaroni and cheese. Then cut some string cheese and American cheese into little bits, sprinkle it on top and microwave everything for another 30 seconds. All that cheese fills you up immensely."

4 HYDRATE

ERIC ROBERTS, *bass*
"With drinks, you're looking for quantity—on the road you're gonna be thirsty, and you can't stock up. I like the one-dollar Arizona 24-ounce can. It's delicious, and when you're done, you can piss in the empty can during long drives. Hopefully it won't tip over while you're sleeping—it's awful waking up to the stale smell of piss."

From left: Eric Roberts, Travis McCoy, Disashi Lumumba-Kasongo and Matt McGinley.

"Domino's will not deliver to you on the road."

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> When Will Your Favorite Pop Star Croak?

#39

MARILYN MANSON

Birth date	JANUARY 5, 1969
Current age	38
Death calculator starts at age	79

CATEGORY	YEARS ADDED/SUBTRACTED
White male (-2), born in Ohio (-1), relocated to Florida (+1)	-2
Divorce: Marriage to dancer Dita Von Teese lasted a year ("She wanted me to change")	-2
Craddle-robbing romance: Dating 19-year-old actress Evan Rachel Wood ("I have found my twin")	-1
Neurobic: Musician, painter, writer (*The Long Hard Road Out of Hell*), filmmaker (*Phantasmagoria: Visions of Lewis Carroll*)	+4
Childhood abuse: Says one of his neighbors molested him several times	-3
Devil worship: Church of Satan's founder Anton LaVey named him a "reverend"	+1
Dangerous height: He is 6'1" (deduct six months for every one inch above 5'9")	-2
Scapegoat: Blamed for Columbine tragedy; an Ohio school bans MM T-shirt, citing his promotion of vulgar and offensive material	-4
Drugs and alcohol: "Normally, when I come to Disneyland, I'm on drugs"; "We drink absinthe; that's what we do."	-8
Hobbyist: Rumored to collect medical prosthetics (artificial limbs, glass eyes)	+1
Obscenity: Charged with criminal sexual conduct after he allegedly rubbed his pelvis on a security guard's head during concert	-1
Bad press: Has been dismissed as "a poor man's Alice Cooper"	-2

Estimated life expectancy	60
Projected year of death	2029

Gerontologist **DR. DAVID J. DEMKO:** "Manson is carrying a lot of emotional baggage. With his recent marital split, he needs to bond with friends and family for a support network."

NEWS ROUNDUP

JENNIFER LOPEZ has reportedly beefed up her security detail after receiving threatening letters because of her habit of wearing animal fur. A message promised "to kill her in public, just like the slaughtered animals whose fur she wears."

COURTNEY LOVE plans to auction off most of her late husband Kurt Cobain's belongings. Daughter Frances Bean gets to keep Cobain's sweater, his guitar and the original lyrics to "Smells Like Teen Spirit." "My daughter doesn't need to inherit a giant bag full of flannel shirts," Love says.

WORD!

"I HOPE HE GETS SYPHILIS AND DIES."
SHARON OSBOURNE ON JOSH HOMME FROM QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

BLOOMING!

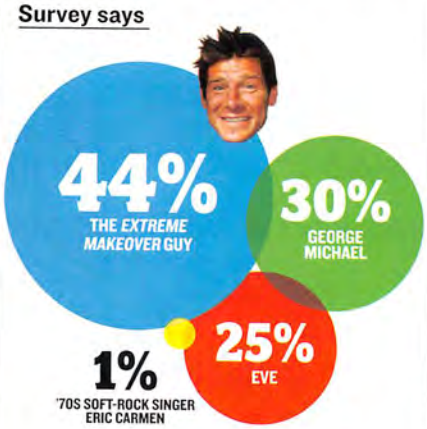
BRITNEY SPEARS reveals her inner flower child

Britney Spears's quest to be taken seriously suffered a setback when purported images of the performer topless surfaced on the Internet. The photographs—in which she discreetly covers her nipples with two red carnations—were supposedly taken in the rocky garden of a friend's Malibu home on April 21. To complement her wardrobe, the smiling Spears sports what looks to be her wedding ring. *Sam Barclay*

Britney's doesn't quite get the whole stop-and-smell-the-roses thing.

> *BLENDER*'S BURNING QUESTION
Who is your favorite recent DUI perp?

Survey says



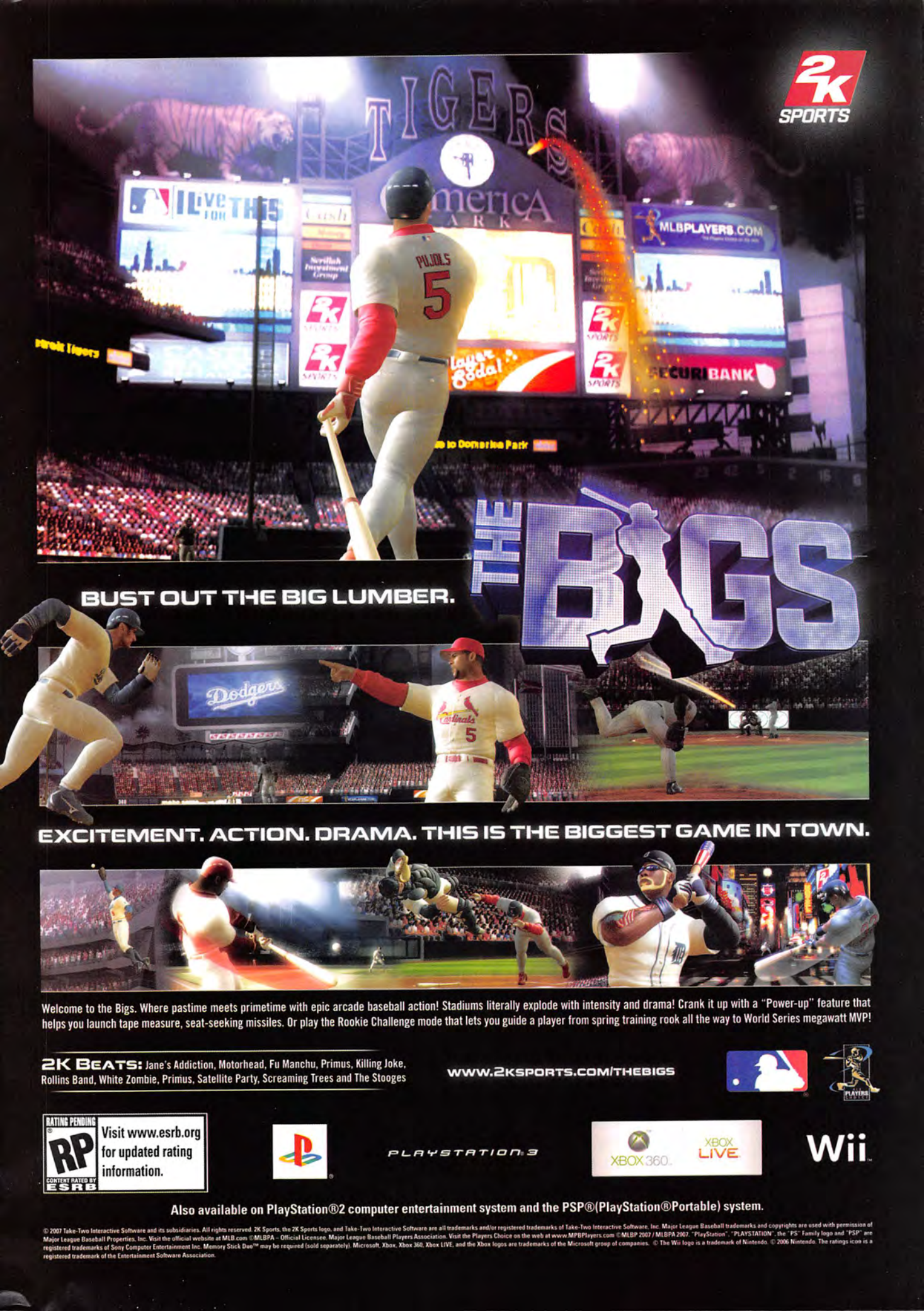
Reader wisdom

"IT IS *NOT* COOL TO DRINK AND DRIVE!"
SARAH CAMPBELL, HOUSTON

> Log on to Blender.com for the next Burning Question. One deserving reader will have his/her thought-provoking comment published in the magazine and win a Luna iPod alarm clock.

MANSON: NICOLAS GUERIN/CORBIS; SPEARS INSET: CARIN A. BAER/WIREIMAGE; SPEARS: SPLASH NEWS;

 "It's not magic, it's not madness/Just the elements I style/And I guarantee faithfully I will never go."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BALMY!

LINDSAY LOHAN rejuvenates her wellness in the Bahamas

1

While the opening weekend box-office receipts for her latest film, *Georgia Rule*, trickled in, Lohan, 20, vacationed in the Bahamas with boyfriend Calum Best, 26.

2

Best, star of U.K. show *Love Island*, has reportedly dated Patsy Kensit, Kimberly Stewart and rumored David Beckham sheetmate Rebecca Loos.

3

Days before the couple's holiday, a U.K. paper quoted Lohan bragging that she was going to bag Jude Law and printed video screen shots of her allegedly snorting cocaine.

NEWS ROUNDUP

A Serbian animal-protection agency wants a **ROLLING STONES** concert relocated in order to avoid having to sedate 300 horses stabled at the venue. More than 100,000 people are expected to attend the concert at the Hippodrome, Belgrade's largest fenced area.

Fall Out Boy's **PETE WENTZ** is displaying limited-edition tour posters made with the band members' blood on his Buzznet site called Friends or Enemies. In related news, **PETE DOHERTY**'s "Bloodworks" show at a London art gallery includes paintings he made using his own blood.

Police are searching pawn shops for a platinum **LYNYRD SKYNYRD** record stolen from the Middleburg, Florida, home of Tammy Clary, daughter of the late Skynyrd frontman, Ronnie Van Zant. The family estimates the record's value at $80,000, though police believe it's worth $1,000.

WORD!

"I PICK OUT ALL HER DRESSES."
MARC ANTHONY ON WIFE J. LO

DELIRIOUS

PRINCE felled by fan's frantic lip-lock

Halfway through his hit song "Kiss" during an intimate May concert in London, Prince invited several fans onstage, one of whom got into the spirit of things by planting a kiss on the diminutive singer's cheek. In what was either a bit of playacting or further evidence of his colossal weirdness, Prince collapsed to the floor in a heap with the female fan standing over him, prompting security to haul his would-be paramour from the stage. The singer then left the stage for a moment and returned with a towel on his head, telling the crowd, "I'm so ashamed I let a total stranger kiss me."
David Peisner

Prince vowed never to wear Axe Body Spray again.

NICE PACKAGE

Soul songstress **AMY WINEHOUSE** gets a special delivery

Winehouse's idea of casual Friday.

British pop star Amy Winehouse recently signed for a Royal Mail package at her London home wearing an unusual outfit. Brandishing her trademark tattoos and supersize bouffant, the "Rehab" singer greeted the surprised mailman in a colorful bra and unbuttoned jeans. Winehouse, who recently lost a tooth in an ice-chomping accident, will be touring the States in venues larger than originally expected, starting in September. Her American debut, *Back to Black*, reached No. 7 on the *Billboard* charts. *Sam Barclay*

LOHAN (FROM TOP): SUNSET PHOTO AND NEWS; BENNETT/ST CLAIR/SPLASH NEWS (3); PRINCE: RICHARD YOUNG/STARTRAKS PHOTO; INSET: GARY ROTHSTEIN/CON SMITH/ETNA; WINEHOUSE: BEN DOME/PACIFIC COAST NEWS; ANTHONY: JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC.

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COLLECT CALL FROM...

Hinder

Each month, one lucky rock star will phone *Blender* HQ every day for a week, just to, you know, share. Up first: hard-rock horndogs Hinder

(INTERVIEWS BY JOSH EELLS ✱ PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOGIN MAYO)

DAY I APRIL 19, 2:03 P.M.

Singer **AUSTIN WINKLER** *phones us from a parking lot on the campus of Northwest Missouri State University*

"Dude, yesterday was so much fun. We were off, so we spent the night hitting bars in St. Louis. We had to take it easy, though, because two nights ago, in Chattanooga, we got absolutely hammered before the show even started. We put Blower [guitarist Joe Garvey] belly down on a skateboard in the parking lot and ran him as fast as we could into a concrete wall—headfirst, no helmet. He lay there for, like, literally 10 minutes—we thought he was dead. But it ... oh, god*damn!* [The line goes quiet as Winkler is momentarily distracted.] Hey, sorry, dude—we're at this college, and our bus is parked right by the track, and there's this fucking insanely hot girl walking by in a sports bra and jogging shorts. 'Tell me, what else you can do with that javelin, darlin'!' Goddamn she's hot."

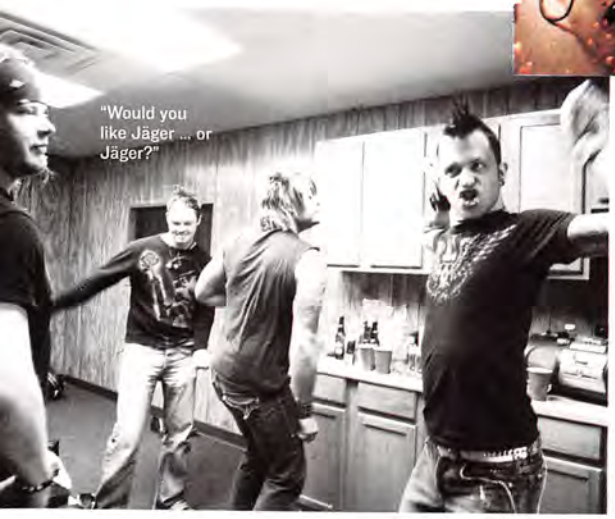
Austin Winkler: Easy on carpet, tough on stains.

TELEPHONE: RYAN MCVAY/GETTY IMAGES

Blower feels the breeze in Wichita Falls.

"All right, which of you jokers put this club soda over here?"

Debating the finer points of neoconservative geopolitics.


"Would you like Jäger ... or Jäger?"

Winkler regrets signing that endorsement contract with Fruit of the Loom.

Rodden, rocking out in the Lone Star State.

DAY 2 APRIL 20, 2:00 P.M.

The next afternoon, drummer **CODY HANSON** *checks in from his parents' house in Oklahoma City*

"Yesterday was awesome. We spent most of the afternoon on the bus staring at those track chicks—we were gonna go outside, but we didn't wanna look like pervs, so we just watched through the windows. Then it was time for our pregame warm-up: We lock ourselves in a room, do Jäger shots and crank up the Mötley Crüe.

"Then, the show. For this tour, we decided to do a college run. Last night was a smaller school, so the capacity was only about 3,800—but it was packed, wall-to-wall. The vibe was crazy. We had to roll out pretty early so we could stop by home for a few hours on the way to the next show, so it was a fairly lame evening for sexual advances. I think [bassist] Mike [Rodden] got laid, but that was it. It's cool, though—we just got fucked up on the bus. We have a Jäger machine, plenty of vodka and tequila, and, of course, the Captain. We don't waste time on beer."

DAY 3 APRIL 21, 2:02 P.M.

Having arrived in Houston to play a local radio festival, Winkler files his update from the venue parking lot

"I'll tell you, buddy, yesterday was about as lame as it gets. We pulled into Oklahoma City just as I was waking up. My mom was out of town, and my dad was working, so I just went home, lay down on the couch, drank a screwdriver and passed out.

"Oh, I did some laundry—I can't even remember the last time that happened. Before we had the luxury of a hospitality guy washing all our shit for us, I used to wear the same pants 20 shows in a row. Girls think it's sexier when you don't shower.

"It's good to come home once in a while and see your friends and family, but when you're used to getting hammered and blasting music on a bus with 20 girls, going to your nephew's T-ball game gets really boring. Like, how do people do this?

"I'm excited about tonight, though. Texas girls are the hottest girls in the U.S. Plus it's already 80 degrees, so you know what that means: bikinis."

DAY 4 APRIL 22, 2:06 P.M.

As the Hinder Express rumbles down the Texas highway, **MIKE RODDEN** *calls to report on the band's day at BuzzFest*

"We went on at four o'clock. At first we were kind of bummed to be playing so early, but it ended up being a good thing, 'cause we had seven whole hours to get drunk and laid. I myself had a very nice girl—and she brought a friend, too. They made out while I did some dirty things to one of them. It was pretty hot.

"Oh, and I almost forgot: Blower got so wasted, he pissed his bunk. He woke up this morning and his entire mattress was soaked. Now it's lying on the front of the bus, drying out in the sun. And since I pissed my bunk about a month ago, I take great comfort in knowing that someone else has done it, too."

"Hello, Lubbock!"

Rodden's faux-hawk secrets revealed.

"I love you, man." "I love *you*, man."

Hinder never skip a breakfast.

DAY 5 APRIL 23, 3:28 P.M.

Winkler calls in from scenic Wichita Falls, sounding a bit worse for wear

"Last night we played a big festival at an outdoor amphitheater in Lubbock, Texas. It was us, Buckcherry, Papa Roach and Puddle of Mudd. The weather was really good, and I saw a lot of titties in the crowd. It was badass."

[Winkler spies a prospective conquest through the window and tosses the phone to Hanson, who, from the sound of things, is in even rougher shape.]

"Dude, I'm fucked up out of my mind right now. I'm trying desperately to sober up. I've been drunk for 24 hours straight. We had to get up at five this morning, for a radio interview in Dallas. So instead of going to bed, me and Blower sat up all night and drank. We finally went to sleep around four. Then we woke up an hour later and started slamming Jäger bombs. But we pulled it off: We did the interview, played a couple of songs and went right back to doing shots. We're pros!"

DAY 6 APRIL 24, 2:01 P.M.

It's a 24-hour drive to the band's next show, in Boca Raton, Florida. Rodden rings us just outside Mobile, Alabama, where they plan to stay the night

"The crowd last night was nuts. They ripped Austin's clothes to shreds. Unfortunately we had to bail as soon as we got offstage, so not much cool happened. Wait, actually: Blower made a beer can disappear in his nutsac. He's got this stretchy nutsac—we call it Tarpy, 'cause he can stretch it out like a tarp. We were gonna light it on fire with WD-40, but we didn't have any matches.

"As for tonight? I don't know. We haven't been to a strip club in a while ... "

"We woke up at 5 A.M. and started slamming Jäger bombs."

CODY HANSON

DAY 7 APRIL 25, 2:07 P.M.

On the seventh and final day, Winkler phones from somewhere on I-95, en route to the Boca show

"Well, we never made it to the strip club, but we did find ourselves a Hooters. Apparently they serve liquor now, so we spent about two hours getting hammered. There was this one really hot waitress who wanted to hang out afterward, but she had to babysit instead.

"Turns out there's not a whole lot to do in Mobile, Alabama. We went to the mall for a while, but they kicked us out for playing baseball in a K•B Toys store. Then we just made the best of it and got annihilated at Applebees. Finally, around 11, we got on the bus and headed for Boca Raton. I hear it's a big retirement destination. Hopefully there'll be a lot of granddaughters there.

"You know, people sometimes ask if I ever get tired of getting wasted and hooking up with random chicks—don't I want something more out of life? To be honest, I don't care what they think. Nothing about my job sucks. I'm 24, I'm young, and I'm stupid. I can't ask for anything more."

J Mascis completed his animal-themed ensemble with hamster pants.

> DO YOU ROCK?

J MASCIS

Does the Dinosaur Jr singer and guitar hero indeed ... ROCK?

Ever get lucky on an airplane?
Not with other people.

Biggest celeb's home you've ever gotten drunk in?
When I was 11, a local judge in New Hampshire threw a party. She winked when she told us where the beer was. It was the first time I ever got drunk.

Worst tour horror story?
Our van got stuck under a hotel landing. When we backed up, the whole roof opened up like a can opener.

Ever harbor a fugitive of the law?
Yes, my one friend who was driving without a license.

Ever kill an animal?
I used to kill lots of crabs on the beach. I'd dig a grave, put them in and throw in rocks.

Thing you most regret?
Hitting a kid over the head with a hockey stick when I was 8. He and my brother were playing keep-away from me.

Biggest celeb in your cell phone?
Thurston Moore.

Worst rock & roll injury?
I inflicted it. I threw my guitar at Frank Vazzano [of Cobra Verde] and split his head open.

Most expensive item of clothing?
$1,000 alligator shoes I got for $750.

What's for dinner?
Probably tofu sausages.

VERDICT

Drunk at 11? Wanton guitar and stick throwing? Here's the deal: Mascis ROCKS!

OUT NOW DINOSAUR JR'S *BEYOND* FAT POSSUM

NEWS ROUNDUP

EVANESCENCE has lost two members, as guitarist John LeCompt and drummer Rocky Gray have left the goth band on unfriendly terms with singer Amy Lee. Lee has no plan to dissolve the group. "We will rock harder than ever," she said.

SAMMY HAGAR made $80 million from the sale of 80 percent of his interest in Cabo Wabo Tequila. "I'm high and I'm happy," the former Van Halen frontman said.

BRANDY has been hit with a third wrongful-death suit, this time from the husband of the woman killed in a car wreck involving the singer. The parents of the woman have already sued for $50 million and filed a second suit on behalf of the deceased's surviving children.

WORD!

"I'M THE ALI ... THE MARVIN GAYE ... THE BOB MARLEY ... THE MARTIN LUTHER KING OF TODAY."
R. KELLY

SMACKED!

Verizon dumps **AKON** for dirty dancing with a minor

Looks like Akon picked the wrong girl to dry hump onstage. In May, Verizon Wireless dropped its sponsorship of the Gwen Stefani tour this summer, for which he was the opening act, after video emerged of him simulating sex with a 15-year-old named Danah Alleyne during a concert in Trinidad. In the footage, he pins the girl down and pummels her with his pelvis. The "Smack That" rapper apologized, saying it was not his intention to embarrass or take advantage of his fans.
Mark Yarm

Dirty Dancing: Trinidad Nights: "Nobody puts Akon in a corner!"

> Weird Band Alert

MY ROBOT FRIEND

A one-man automaton hoping to spread human seed

Meet Tron's gay brother.

Who is he?
By day, he's a New York computer programmer named Howard Rigberg who prefers to give his age in "robot years." By night, he plays Devo-influenced tunes in a costume made of duct tape, wires and an LED display.

What's with the outfit?
"I wanted to capture people's interest theatrically and musically," says Rigberg, who does his own lighting and makes his own videos. One of his stage props is a flame-spewing penis.

A penis, fine. But why a flame-throwing one?
Procreation of the species, it would seem. "To inspire humans to have more sexual intercourse," Rigberg says. But not all clubs allow the fire-breathing phallus. "I have some that blow white or plastic confetti." *Dan Reilly*

MASCIS: SIMON SARIN/RETNA UK; AKON: WENN (2); MY ROBOT FRIEND: ALEX WRIGHT; KELLY: JASON

 "I don't understand it when a nigga bring his girlfriend to da club/Freakin' all on the floor wit his girlfriend in the club."

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The Long Blondes

Fashionable British new wavers name-check Anna Karenina, hate "masculine music" and have a drummer called Screech

(BY MARK YARM * PHOTOGRAPH BY DEAN CHALKLEY)

STYLISH INDIE ROCKERS the Long Blondes may hail from Sheffield, England, home of British superstars Arctic Monkeys, but it's the artier Sheffield bands of yore—ABC, the Human League and Pulp—with whom they feel a real kinship. In part, that's because the coed Blondes, whose five members range in age from 25 to 28, are at their most comfortable living in the past. "We're preoccupied with this idea of faded glamour—film stars of yesteryear, like Edie Sedgwick," says lead singer Kate Jackson.

Sedgwick, Tolstoy heroine Anna Karenina and '50s movie star Arlene Dahl all get shout-outs on the band's catchy, new wave–inspired debut, *Someone to Drive You Home*, which was produced by Pulp bassist Steve Mackey. That the album is filled with first-person accounts of desperate women isn't surprising—until you learn that two-thirds of the lyrics were written by male guitarist Dorian Cox. "We don't really like masculine music," Cox says. "I find it interesting trying to work out what women are thinking."

The quintet—keyboardist Emma Chaplin, bassist Reenie Hollis and drummer Screech Louder (née Mark Turvey) round out the lineup—formed in early 2003. Since then, Jackson, a former secondhand-store employee known for her vintage chic (berets, neck scarves, pencil skirts), has emerged as a bona fide fashion icon in Britain.

"It's odd when young girls come to our gigs dressed like me," Jackson says. "But we get Dorian and Screech clones as well. At one gig in Holland, there were three Screeches in the front row!

"Dressing up gives you confidence," she adds. "I couldn't go onstage in anything less than a four-inch stiletto."

All About Us!

FAVORITE BAND "Wild Beasts, from Leeds. The singer sounds like a cross between Kate Bush and David Bowie. His voice is haunting." (Jackson)

RECOMMENDED READING "*The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, by Stephen Chbosky. It captures the awkwardness of what it's like being a teenager." (Louder)

MUST-SEE TV "*The Office*. I figured it wouldn't be as good as the British version, but it's brilliant." (Cox)

"I COULDN'T GO ONSTAGE IN ANYTHING LESS THAN A FOUR-INCH STILETTO."

From left: Screech Louder, Reenie Hollis, Kate Jackson, Emma Chaplin and Dorian Cox.

OUT NOW *Someone to Drive You Home* (Rough Trade)

 "I say hats off/Get your hats off/Take your hats off/Get your hats off for the blue beret, blue beret, blue beret."

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To her, it *is* brain surgery.

> WHISTLE WHILE YOU WORK

DR. KATRINA S. FIRLIK

The Greenwich, Connecticut, neurosurgeon shares her playlist for drilling skulls, slicing brains

1

"BRAIN STEW"
GREEN DAY

"Green Day is good for opening music—by opening, I mean removing a portion of the skull. You have to play it pretty loudly to overcome the volume of the drill we use. The title 'Brain Stew' is fitting, too."

2

"ALIVE"
PEARL JAM

"Eddie Vedder's voice is both masculine and melodic. It sets a good tone for the more carpentrylike parts of the operation—the 'bone work,' so to speak."

3

"DON'T KNOW WHY"
NORAH JONES

"When we get to the more delicate parts, like opening the lining over the brain and doing work under the microscope, we go with something light. One of my colleagues got in trouble for listening to an unedited version of Eminem."

4

"ANOTHER NAIL IN MY HEART"
SQUEEZE

"When you're closing, you want something like Squeeze that's fun and light with a good beat. It gets everybody in a good mood. At the end of the operation, it's important to turn the music off or down, because patients don't want to wake up in a disco."

OBITS

BOBBY "BORIS" PICKETT
69, April 25, in Los Angeles, of leukemia. Spooky voice of the enduring Halloween anthem "Monster Mash." The song, featuring Pickett's Boris Karloff impression and a then-unknown Leon Russell on piano, topped the pop charts in 1962.

DORIS RICHARDS
91, April 21, in Britain. Keith Richards's mom. Doris, who suffered from cancer and died in her sleep, bought the future Rolling Stone his first guitar for his 15th birthday. Her death occurred the same month in which Keith retracted a story that he had snorted his father's cremated ashes.

GLENN SUTTON
69, April 17, in Nashville, of a heart attack. Songwriter whose credits include hits for Jerry Lee Lewis ("What's Made Milwaukee Famous (Has Made a Loser Out of Me)"), Tammy Wynette ("I Don't Want to Play House" and "Your Good Girl's Gonna Go Bad") and David Houston ("Almost Persuaded"). Sutton also produced former wife Lynn Anderson's 1970 smash "(I Never Promised You a) Rose Garden."

WORD!

"I LIKE PORN!"
KANYE WEST

The Hives' Vigilante Carlstroem (left) and Pelle Almqvist decide whether to hit the malt shop or the sock hop.

> IN THE STUDIO

"ALL OVER THE PLACE"

THE HIVES break out their passports, AC/DC and disco-era Rolling Stones to record their fourth album

AFTER RELEASING THREE CDs of tight, charging garage punk with a repeating cast of characters in their native Sweden, the Hives were ready for a change. So for album No. 4, they've hit the road, recording in England with producer Garret Lee (U2), in Mississippi with Dennis Herring (Modest Mouse) and in Miami with the Neptunes' Pharrell Williams. "We know we're the best at playing fast rock music," says frontman Pelle Almqvist, "but we wanted to stretch in different directions."

So far, the results sound "less cohesive but more interesting," Almqvist says, than their past efforts. "It's the most shambolic recording we've ever done. It's all over the place. There are slow ballads, punk songs and synthesizers." They've also been drawing inspiration from disco-era Rolling Stones and AC/DC for the feel "of a great rock band trying something new and not really succeeding. We've always loved when bands sound like they aren't sure where they're going. There's something great about when things become awkward." *David Peisner*

All About Our Record

PRODUCERS Dennis Herring, Garret Lee, Pharrell Williams

STUDIO Grondahl Studios, Stockholm; Olympic Studios, London; Hit Factory, Miami; Sweet Tea Studio, Oxford, Mississippi

LAST ALBUM *Tyrannosaurus Hives*

NEW ALBUM *The World's First Perfect Album* (working title), due September

> ALSO IN THE STUDIO

Indie sextet **THE GO! TEAM** are in London and Brooklyn recording their follow-up to 2004's *Thunder, Lightning, Strike*, due this fall.

Soft-rock singer **JAMES BLUNT** is in L.A. working with producer Tom Rothrock (Elliott Smith) on his sophomore album, due September.

Coke-rap duo **CLIPSE** are making their follow-up to 2006's *Hell Hath No Fury* with the Neptunes and Danja, due December.

FIRLIK: KIT KITTLE; HEADPHONES: RAINER HOLZ/ZEFA/CORBIS; HIVES: BRUCE NEWMAN; BLUNT: JEFFREY MAYER/WIREIMAGE;

 "Green is best, of all the flavors/Go ahead, it's only water/I love my Swedish fish."

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THE 33 MOST WANTED SONGS IN AMERICA

Neither rain, nor sun, nor bald rockers can top a ticked-off Kelly this month

1 KELLY CLARKSON

"NEVER AGAIN"

MY DECEMBER

Rough translation: Do not break Kelly Clarkson's heart, or she will destroy you in song! Yep, another great breakup jam compliments of Ms. "Since U Been Gone," from her brand-new album. Catch her on tour this summer—she's on the road from July through September, hitting Live Earth at New York's Giants Stadium among other stops.

HOW WE DID IT

aolmusic.com

The Most Wanted Songs chart is based on the number of audience searches, downloads and video plays on AOLmusic.com.

POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"NEVER AGAIN"	KELLY CLARKSON	MY DECEMBER *RCA*
2	"UMBRELLA"	RIHANNA FEAT. JAY-Z	GOOD GIRL GONE BAD *DEF JAM*
3	"SUMMER LOVE"	JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE	FUTURESEX/ LOVESOUNDS *JIVE*
4	"HOME"	DAUGHTRY	DAUGHTRY *19/RCA*
5	"WHAT I'VE DONE"	LINKIN PARK	MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT *MACHINE SHOP/WARNER BROS.*
6	"DON'T MATTER"	AKON	KONVICTED *UNIVERSAL MOTOWN*
7	"BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY"	FERGIE	THE DUTCHESS *INTERSCOPE*
8	"BUY U A DRANK (SHAWTY SNAPPIN')"	T-PAIN FEAT. YUNG JOC	EPIPHANY *JIVE*
9	"MAKES ME WONDER"	MAROON 5	IT WON'T BE SOON BEFORE LONG *OCTONE/A&M*
10	"WHEN YOU'RE GONE"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	THE BEST DAMN THING *RCA*
11	"WAIT FOR YOU"	ELLIOTT YAMIN	ELLIOTT YAMIN *HICKORY*
12	"I WONDER"	KELLIE PICKLER	SMALL TOWN GIRL *19/BNA*
13	"LIP GLOSS"	LIL MAMA	LIP GLOSS *JIVE*
14	"U + UR HAND"	PINK	I'M NOT DEAD *JIVE*
15	"LOOK AFTER YOU"	THE FRAY	HOW TO SAVE A LIFE *EPIC*
16	"I DON'T NEED A MAN"	THE PUSSYCAT DOLLS	PCD *INTERSCOPE*
17	"BECAUSE OF YOU"	NE-YO	BECAUSE OF YOU *DEF JAM*
18	"I TRIED"	BONE THUGS-N-HARMONY FEAT. AKON	STRENGTH & LOYALTY *INTERSCOPE*
19	"CAN U BELIEVE"	ROBIN THICKE	THE EVOLUTION OF ROBIN THICKE *INTERSCOPE*
20	"ALL GOOD THINGS (COME TO AN END)"	NELLY FURTADO	LOOSE *GEFFEN*
21	"BEFORE HE CHEATS"	CARRIE UNDERWOOD	SOME HEARTS *RCA*
22	"BEAUTIFUL LIAR"	BEYONCÉ FEAT. SHAKIRA	B'DAY *COLUMBIA/ SONY URBAN MUSIC*
23	"STOLEN"	DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL	DUSK AND SUMMER *VAGRANT/INTERSCOPE*
24	"I'M A FLIRT"	R. KELLY FEAT. T.I. AND T-PAIN	DOUBLE UP *JIVE*
25	"(YOU WANT TO) MAKE A MEMORY"	BON JOVI	LOST HIGHWAY *ISLAND/MERCURY NASHVILLE*
26	"POP, LOCK & DROP IT"	HUEY	STOMP THE YARD SOUNDTRACK *JIVE*
27	"SIGNAL FIRE"	SNOW PATROL	SPIDER-MAN 3 SOUNDTRACK *RECORD COLLECTION*
28	"CUPID'S CHOKEHOLD"	GYM CLASS HEROES	AS CRUEL AS SCHOOL CHILDREN *DECAYDANCE/ FUELED BY RAMEN*
29	"THNKS FR TH MMRS"	FALL OUT BOY	INFINITY ON HIGH *ISLAND*
30	"LOVE STORY"	KATHARINE MCPHEE	KATHARINE MCPHEE *19/RCA*
31	"BEAUTIFUL DISASTER"	JON MCLAUGHLIN	INDIANA *ISLAND*
32	"GIRLFRIEND"	AVRIL LAVIGNE	THE BEST DAMN THING *RCA*
33	"LIKE THIS"	KELLY ROWLAND FEAT. EVE	MS. KELLY *COLUMBIA*

WEEK ENDING // JUNE 3, 2007

4 DAUGHTRY

"HOME"

DAUGHTRY

The Chris Daughtry juggernaut continues steamrolling the charts with this lighter-raising ode to a warm bed and the woman who loves him—the second hit single from his double-platinum debut. Top that, Elliott Yamin! Catch Daughtry all through July as they share dates with fellow grunge devotees Nickelback.

5 LINKIN PARK

"WHAT I'VE DONE"

MINUTES TO MIDNIGHT

The rock howlers try to shed their rap-metal past with this keening, epic first single—and a video with a bunch of cool shit blowing up. See them next month as they kick off their Projekt Revolution Tour with My Chemical Romance.

13 LIL MAMA

"LIP GLOSS"

LIP GLOSS

Cosmetic companies can thank this 17-year-old Brooklynite if there's a sudden spike in summer sales, courtesy of her gleeful ode to petroleum lip balm. Bonus fun: Send a pic of your glossed pucker to LilMamaLips@gmail.com and she'll post it to her MySpace page.

CLARKSON: CHAPMAN BAEHLER; DAUGHTRY: DANNY CLINCH; LINKIN PARK: JAMES MINCHIN.

"WE DON'T MEAN LIKE, FOREVER, FOREVER."

- STRIDE MARKETING TEAM

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★★★ *-Paste* "Exhilarating" *-Spin*

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Skynyrd Grave-Robbing * Alien Hip-hop * Shock Jocks

INSIDER

{ KNOWING STUFF IS GOOD }*

T.I.

Ever hear the one about the mouse and the giraffe? Dirty jokes and more from the king of the South (P. 56)

T.I. starts beef with gravity.

PEGGY SIROTA

T.I.: CORBIS/OUTLINE; MONKEY: JESSE FROHMAN.

THE INFOTAINER

(A Funbag of Essential Arcana)

MORNING ZOO BABYLON

Think Don Imus was bad? Think again. Morning DJs elsewhere on the dial will talk about almost anything to get your attention—whether it's kiddie-fiddling, animal torturing or taunting victims of natural disasters ...

By DAVID PEISNER

< DEPRAVITY METER >

	Horrifying
	Disgusting
	Reprehensible
	Wrong
	Off-Color

MAXIMUM EFFORT/GETTY IMAGES; JESSE EDGE/MAXIMUM

AUNT MISBEHAVIN'

WHO: **SLY**
CRAVEN ACT: **HURLING RACIAL SLURS AT THE BUSH CABINET**

There are certain phrases that white radio hosts should probably avoid when referring to African-Americans. Yet in November 2004, Madison, Wisconsin, talk-show host John "Sly" Sylvester trotted out not one but two such phrases, calling then National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice "Aunt Jemima" and Secretary of State Colin Powell "Uncle Tom." Sly's slurs were met with widespread condemnation, so two days later he apologized on his show ... to Aunt Jemima: "She wasn't a self-serving hack politician who got up in front of Congress and lied. Aunt Jemima didn't kowtow to Don Rumsfeld or Dick Cheney."

When air quotes attack!

A grieving family: Pure hilarity!

CARDINAL SIN

WHO: **BEAU DURAN**
CRAVEN ACT: **TAUNTING A BASEBALL WIDOW**

With their beloved Arizona Diamondbacks locked in a play-off series with the St. Louis Cardinals in 2002, the morning crew at Phoenix's KUPD decided to support the team in the best way it knew how—with a phone call to Flynn Kile, whose husband, Cards pitcher Darryl Kile, had died suddenly of heart failure three months earlier. On the air, KUPD's Beau Duran called Flynn and asked her if she was going to the day's game. When she told him she was, Duran dropped his zinger: "I was wondering if you needed a date, by any chance." He then told her she was "really hot" before she abruptly ended the call. KUPD initially declined to take any action against Duran, but after repeated cries for his head—including one from the Cardinals skipper, who threatened to "deal with it physically"—the station fired the offending DJ.

"You, there! More fart sounds, posthaste!"

GUN PLAY

WHO: **OPIE & ANTHONY**
CRAVEN ACT: **LAUGHING AT THE VIRGINIA TECH KILLER'S PLAY**

Greg Hughes and Anthony Cumia—better known as Opie & Anthony—earned their shock-jock wings in August 2002 by broadcasting a live account of a couple allegedly having sex in New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral, a stunt that got them bounced from radio. They resurfaced later on satellite radio, where, on the morning of April 18, 2007, they performed *Richard McBeef*, the play written by Cho Seung-Hui, who two days earlier had killed 33 people at Virginia Tech. The performance finished amid cheers of "Bravo!" and the sound of gunfire, followed by one of the hosts asking, "What, too much?" Complaints were surprisingly muted. But within a month, the duo would make morning-zoo history, becoming the first shock jocks to get suspended from satellite radio—for a segment in which a homeless man crudely expressed his desire to have sex with Laura Bush and Condoleezza Rice.

LOST IN TRANSLATION

WHO: **JV AND ELVIS**
CRAVEN ACT: **MAKING A RACIST PRANK CALL TO A CHINESE RESTAURANT**

One day after Don Imus's comments about the Rutgers women's basketball team caused national outrage, fellow CBS radio employees Jeff "JV" Vandergrift and Dan "Elvis" Lay of WFNY's "The Dog House" morning show in New York dredged up a multitude of tired ethnic slurs during a prank call to a local Chinese restaurant. After saying the "Chinese man" on the phone "probably can't drive for shit," the caller ordered "slimp flied lice" and "some old dung." He referred to the employee's penis as a "tiny egg roll" and said, "Tell that hot Asian girl who answered the telephone I'd like to tap her ass." Initial reaction to the stunt was minimal, so JV and Elvis re-aired it, a week after CBS had finally shown Imus the door. This produced the requisite cries of indignation and got JV and Elvis suspended and subsequently fired.

"Aw! Why can't *I* ever be Maximus?"

ROGUE WAVE

WHO: **MISS JONES**
CRAVEN ACT: **JEERING AT TSUNAMI VICTIMS**

When the December 2004 tsunami decimated South Asia, killing nearly 250,000 people, the world struggled to find an appropriate response. In January 2005, the Hot 97 "Miss Jones in the Morning" team offered "The Tsunami Song," a parody sung to the tune of "We Are the World" that referred to "screaming Chinks," "little Chinamen swept away" and featured the memorable line "You could hear God laughing, 'Swim, you bitches, swim.'" When, days later, an Asian-American member of the crew objected, Miss Jones snapped, "All you Asians think you're superior," while DJ Todd Lynn howled, "I'm gonna start shooting some Asians." After fielding protests, which included a diss song from Asian-American rapper, Jin, Hot 97 fired Lynn and one of the show's producers but let Jones and two others off with a two-week suspension. An apparently unchastened Jones made headlines again a year later, calling a Trinidadian-American labor leader "a dumb coconut" who "probably doesn't have a green card."

Blender's crack team of music critics.

TSUNAMI PROTEST: DENNIS VAN TINE/LFI; MISS JONES: SHAREIF ZIYADA/FILMMAGIC; JV & ELVIS: SCOTT RUDNER/ALTRA

Fans celebrate Detergent Man's triumph over the Greaseman.

GREASE ISN'T THE WORD

WHO: THE GREASEMAN
CRAVEN ACT: ENDORSING RACIST MURDER

Doug "the Greaseman" Tracht's 1986 comment about the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday—"Kill four more and we can take a whole week off"—didn't exactly endear him to the black community. But the worst was still to come from the aging radio fixture. Hosting the morning show on Washington, D.C., classic-rock station WARW in February 1999, he expressed his dislike of a track from *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* by saying, "No wonder people drag them behind trucks." The day before, a Texas jury had returned the first conviction in the murder of James Byrd Jr., a middle-aged black man who was chained to the back of a pickup by white supremacists and dragged for three miles—a punishment the Greaseman apparently thought suitable for black people making music not to his liking. Tracht was fired within 48 hours. Even so, the FCC said his comments didn't violate decency standards.

SQUEAL LIKE A PIG

WHO: BUBBA THE LOVE SPONGE
CRAVEN ACT: MASTERMINDING ANIMAL CRUELTY

When Tampa Bay shock jock Todd "Bubba the Love Sponge" Clem encouraged his listeners to bring dead animals to the parking lot of WXTB on the morning of February 27, 2001, for a "Road Kill Barbecue," no one expected a genteel country-club brunch. But when one enterprising listener showed up with a caged live wild boar, things became uglier than expected. While the crowd cheered and a producer described the scene to Bubba via cell phone, one man kneeled on the boar's neck, while another castrated it and then slit its throat with a six-inch hunting knife. In the studio, Bubba played recorded pig squeals and joked about the slaughter; the boar was later cooked and eaten by the assembled crowd. Local prosecutors weren't impressed and indicted Bubba on felony animal-cruelty charges, though he was later acquitted.

Mr. Love Sponge goes to Washington.

LIVE BY THE SWORD

WHO: MARCONI AND TINY
CRAVEN ACT: LAMPOONING A TERRORIST KILLING

The deaths of Americans at the hands of Iraqi militants is usually surefire comedy gold. But surprisingly, the belly laughs were in short supply in May 2004, when Joshua "Marconi" Boyce and Andy "Tiny" Aasen of Portland, Oregon's KNRK morning show aired the audio portion of U.S. contractor Nick Berg's gruesome decapitation in Iraq. Over the gurgling sounds and terrified screams Berg made in the last moments of his life, the DJs provided listeners not only with exacting play-by-play commentary, but also musical accompaniment and the DJs' own audible laughter. KNRK suspended the duo when the show ended and fired them soon after. Even so, Marconi rebounded quickly—taking a morning-show job in Oklahoma City before returning to Portland's airwaves less than a year later on a rival station.

WATER TORTURE

WHO: TRISH, MANEY AND LUKAS
CRAVEN ACT: ENCOURAGING A WOMAN TO DRINK HERSELF TO DEATH

In early 2007, KDND's "Morning Rave" in Sacramento held the Hold Your Wee for a Wii contest, in which the listener who could drink the most water without urinating would win a Nintendo Wii. Throughout the broadcast, the show's three DJs—Trish, Maney and Lukas—mocked the participants, joking repeatedly about their respective deaths. When a listener identifying herself as a nurse called in to warn that contestants could die of water intoxication, one DJ remarked, "They signed releases, so we're not responsible. It's OK." Hours after the end of the contest, Jennifer Strange, a 28-year-old mother of three who finished second and got a pair of Justin Timberlake tickets for her trouble, was found dead—of water intoxication. The show's three hosts were fired along with seven station employees; but the district attorney declined to file criminal charges.

THE MOST DEPRAVED MORNING STUNT OF ALL TIME

ABUSE OF POWER

WHO: STAR
CRAVEN ACT: THREATENING TO MOLEST A 4-YEAR-OLD

When you've mocked Aaliyah's death, taunted an Indian call-center employee with racial slurs and referred to a caller as a "nappy-headed nigger whore," you're not left with much to say that will shock the public. Or so many thought until Troi "Star" Torain of the "Star & Buc Wild Show" on New York's Power 105.1 attacked rival morning-show host DJ Envy over several days in May 2006. In a chillingly composed voice, Star referred to Envy's Asian wife as a "slant-eyed whore" and threatened "to do an R. Kelly on" his 4-year-old daughter. For those unfamiliar with Kelly's alleged exploits, Star broke it down, voicing his desire to both "tinkle" and "skeet" on Envy's "seed," then added his own epicurean twist: "I want to put some mayonnaise between your baby girl's ass crack and take a bite." To prove he wasn't just talk, he offered listeners $500 for information on where the child went to school. Star was fired and later arrested on harassment and child-endangerment charges. The charges were eventually dismissed, and Star showed his contrition by suing his former employer for breach of contract.

GREASEMAN: MARIO TAMA/AFP/GETTY; PROTEST: MARIO TAMA/AFP/GETTY; BUBBA THE LOVE SPONGE: CHRIS O'MEARA/AP; STAR: NEIL DECRESCENZO/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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DEAR SUPERSTAR*

(You Send Questions, We Get Answers)

T.I.

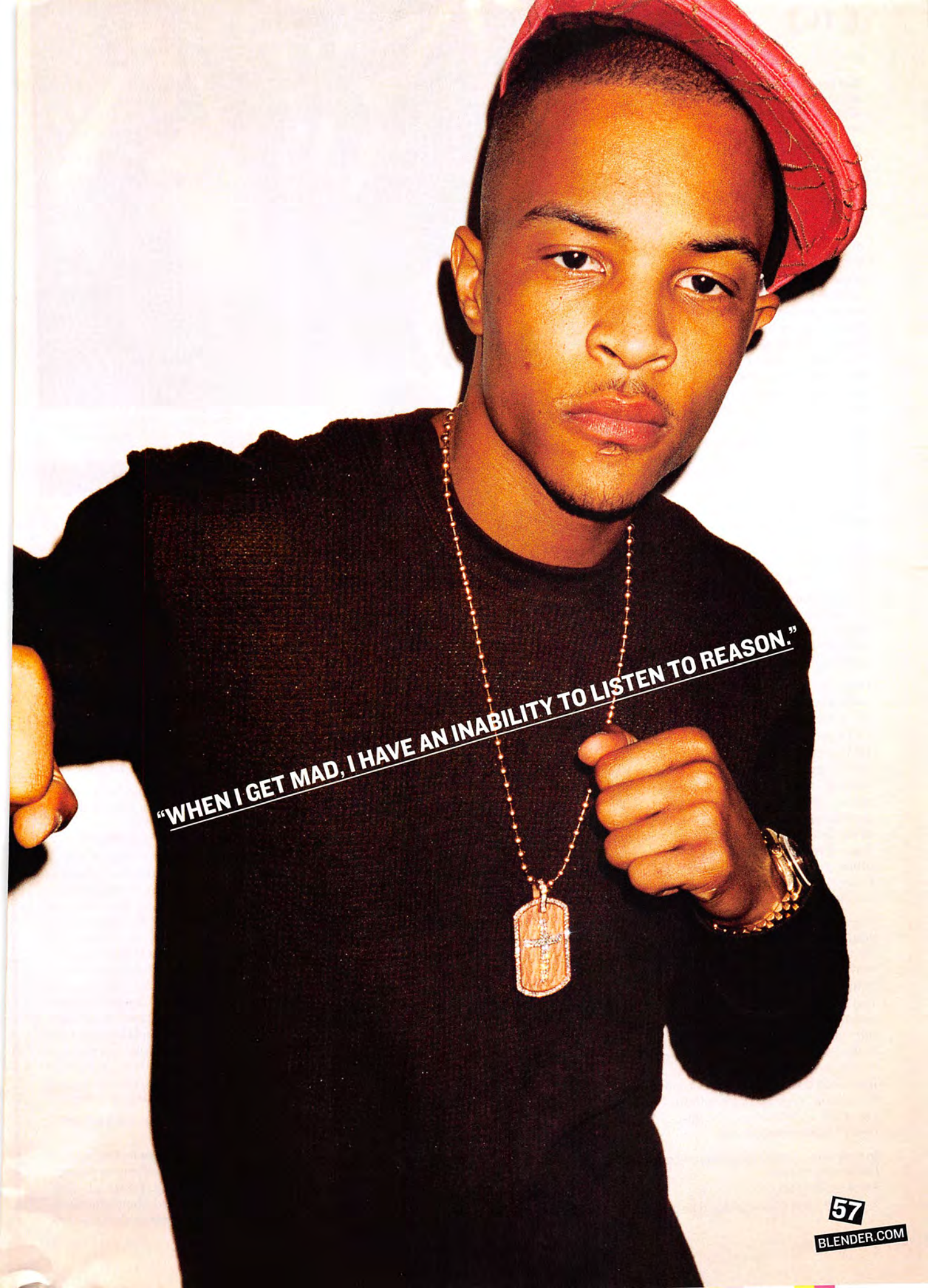
THE ATLANTA TRAP-RAP STAR OFFERS A STEP-BY-STEP MANUAL FOR SHIV CONSTRUCTION, DEEMS NIRVANA THE BEST ROCK BAND OF ALL TIME—AND TELLS OPRAH A THING OR TWO ABOUT CENSORSHIP

By JONAH WEINER
Photograph by TERRY RICHARDSON

IF THE HIP-HOP -superstar thing ever dries up, T.I. would make a fine real estate agent. It's a sunny spring day in Atlanta, and the biggest-selling rapper of 2006 is piloting a sleek new speedboat around Lake Spivey, noting the various homes of his neighbors. "That one has an indoor pool that connects to an outdoor pool by a slide"; "That one has its own tennis court"; "Look. You could clear these trees out, put up a whole new house right here." From the private docks to the bazillion-room behemoths that line its shore, Lake Spivey is a long way from the Buckhead streets where Clifford Harris grew up, as he puts it, "a welfare baby." Now, along with some very wealthy, very white people, he calls it his home.

Not that his appearance here was totally welcomed. "They wanted 2.5 million for that house over there," T.I. says solemnly, slowing the speedboat to a crawl. "I was ready to pay cash. But once they saw who I was, the house wasn't for sale anymore. If you ask me, it's 'cause I'm a young, black man." *Blender* says something to the effect of *That's really fucked up*. "Nah," he says, chuckling, and guns the throttle for effect. "I just bought a bigger house." (A $5 million, 20-room palace across the water, to be precise.)

Domani and Messiah, two of T.I.'s four children, squeal as Dad makes the boat bounce like it's on hydraulics. With *T.I. vs. T.I.P.*, his fifth album, coming out in July, and with his biggest movie role to date in multiplexes this fall—he's starring opposite Denzel Washington and Russell Crowe in Ridley Scott's true-crime tale *American Gangster*—T.I. won't be able to spend many days like this with his kids for a while. "I wanted them to see you interview me, though," he explains. "So they know what my job is, and why all this"—he waves his hand grandly across the lake—"is possible." A family in khaki shorts glides by, waving politely. A goose flies across the stern. "So let's go. Let's hear the questions."



"WHEN I GET MAD, I HAVE AN INABILITY TO LISTEN TO REASON."

Joe boxer (clockwise from top): T.I. feels the breeze live; homey Lil Wayne with an expensive armrest; onstage with Justin Timberlake.

You grew up living with, alternately, your grandmother, your mother and your father. What qualities did you get from each?
500kilohurts, Covington, GA

My family is made up of hustlers. We all self-made, entrepreneur types. My mom flipped credit cards here and there, checks here and there. She wasn't with the nine to five. She taught me to stay grounded. She just keep it real. You know, we got fancy china and crystal glasses, and she still drinks out of Dixie cups. She washes them out and reuses them. But I also know how to live like I don't have a care in the world, and that's what I learned from my pops. He lived in Manhattan—94th and Columbus, big time, big money. He was running numbers, pimping, doing other things; he always had everything in abundance. And my grandmama, that's where I learned to be tough. She wasn't the normal laugh, smile, bake-you-some-cookies-type grandmama. She was the grandmama your mom would take you to when you were doing bad in school!

What does T.I. mean, and does anyone call you by your real name, Clifford?
eff.ess.eff, Chicago

T.I.'s an abbreviation. My nickname is Tip—it's something my pops gave me. It coulda been 'cause I was skinny, like a Q-tip ... The only people who call me Clifford are lawyers, doctors, bankers, policemen and judges.

I know you're friends with Lil Wayne. But who's a better rapper?
sho_u_right, Toronto

[T.I.'s son Domani interrupts to say, "I like Lil Wayne!"] Ha! You like Lil Wayne? I like Lil Wayne, too. It depends on what you're looking for in a rapper. He's good at metaphors, punch lines, impactful verses. He's good for *oohs* and *aahs*. I can play both sides of the fence a little more. The pop side, you know, I can suit up and be on some whole other shit aside from "hip-hop urban." Not to say he can't do it, he probably just doesn't have an interest in it right now.

You went to prison for probation violation right when "Rubber Band Man" took off. Did fame make incarceration easier or harder?
reydaprince, Des Moines, IA

A little bit of both. Made it easier 'cause I had a reputation that preceded me, so there wasn't a lot of standoffish situations. People only gonna mess with you if the shit you kickin' ain't real. COs, though, some of them would go out of their way to make my life a little harder sometimes. I'd ask 'em to keep the phone on an extra 30 minutes—they'd cut it off 30 minutes early. Just to say, *It doesn't matter who you are.*

In case I ever get locked up, can you tell me how to make a shiv?
henry.gee, Brooklyn, NY

A shank? I don't know if that'd be proper for a publication like *Blender*, but sure I can. They gon' give you a toothbrush, a bar of soap, a county manual, a comb and toothpaste. With that toothbrush—everywhere in jail there's concrete, so you just file it against the concrete until you make a sharp point. But making it isn't the hard part, it's hiding it. I have a few more tricks I can't tell you. That's the G-code. It's like magicians: Don't give up the trick, no matter what.

I'm a screenwriter with an idea for a hip-hop remake of *Turner & Hooch*. You play a vigilante cop with a pit-bull partner. It's called *Off Da Chain*. You in?
pitch_89, Ontario, CA

Pshhh. Who's the director? Who's the costar? Who's the producer? What's the budget? Once I get the answers, I'll make a decision. I can't answer a question without knowing everything about the situation. But that does sound a little Disney Channel to me.

Funky drummer: T.I. fave Cobain.

"My family is made up of hustlers. We all self-made entrepreneurs."

When's the last time you cried?
beepbeep, Charleston, SC

When my little girl died [T.I.'s off-and-on girlfriend suffered a miscarriage in early 2007]. You never really think about whether the baby's gonna make it, especially when you've had as many as me. It's a bitter pill to swallow.

What non-hip-hop music do you love?
neva4eva, Chantilly, VA

I love Nirvana. That's my all-time favorite rock band. They kept it real. The lyrics were clear as mud, but you knew what he was talking about. Not getting along with your parents? Anyone could understand that.

You've said you want to act in comedies. Tell us a funny joke.
Harold.Reddy, Boiceville, NY

There's a mouse and a giraffe in a bar. Mouse is at the bar, ordering heavy. He's buying it all. And the giraffe's at the other end of the bar, and she looks at the mouse, you know, winks her eye, gives him some play. So he buys her a drink, and they leave the bar together. Mouse shows up the next day, same bar, comes back in, he looks weathered—he's tired, beat up, worn out. And the bartender say, "Damn! You look like you been through shit." And the mouse say, "Yeah, man, with that giraffe last night, between fucking and getting some head, I musta run 30 miles!"

What's the secret to winning a hip-hop feud?
jjdelvino, Nebraska City, NE

Gain the support of the people, find out the strengths and weaknesses of your opponent, apply pressure as needed. Never let yourself seem too overexerted about the issue. Always make it like [brushes shoulder] >>

FROM TOP: BEN ROSE/WIREIMAGE; LARRY BUSACCA/WIREIMAGE; PIOTR SIKORA/CORBIS OUTLINE; CHARLES PETERSON/RETNA.

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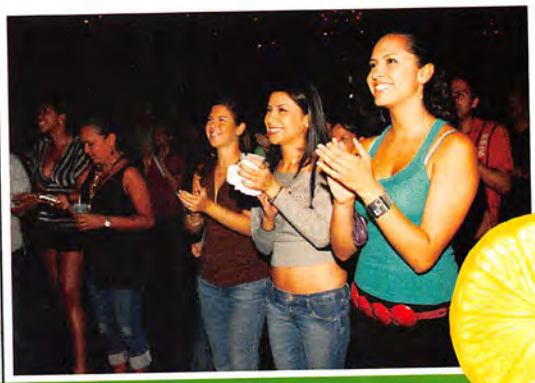

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it's nothing. You don't wanna go at someone who's so beneath you it doesn't even make sense. If you're so unevenly matched, even if you win, it counts against you. That was my situation with the only feud I've had [with Lil' Flip]. Even though I was winning in a landslide, people were like, "But you're so much better than that."

You're a Falcons fan. If they're ever gonna make it to the Super Bowl, should Michael Vick keep running, or stay in the pocket?
saltpillar21, New London, CT

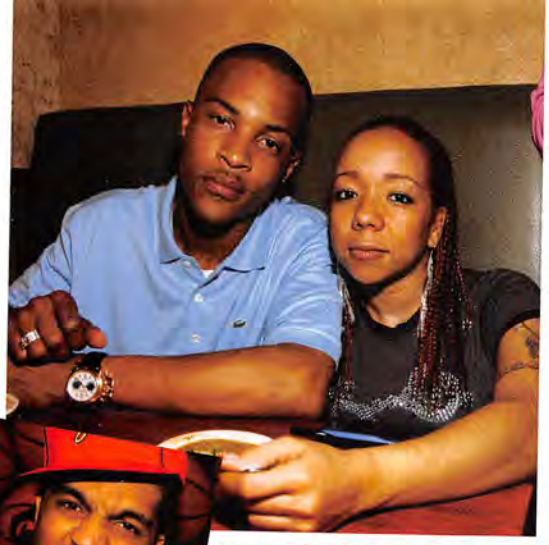
We should let him follow his killer instincts and develop a team around him that will support those instincts. You gotta let him fly. He can make magic happen. The blitz is coming, the feet are moving, you gotta follow the motion, baby!

In the wake of the Imus scandal, hip-hop has been taking a lot of heat. Do you think rappers use the word *ho* too much?
shariza.sweet, Yonkers, NY

There are ho's out there. *Ho* means when you exploit yourself and your body, exchange sexual favors for currency. It's a personal decision a woman has to make. Can't no man put a woman shaking her ass in a music video without her permission. I just see rappers being attacked, rather than being related to. I put it like this: Hip-hop has always been about what you see outside in your neighborhood. If you wanna censor this music, you can't censor it when it gets to the radio stations: You can't put someone in the jungle all their lives, and then when they create an opportunity to get out, you're critiquing them for acting like they from the jungle. Do I think standards could be raised? Of course. Do I think hip-hop artists and record executives could be more responsible? Of course. But in order for you to expect them to act like they not from the jungle, you shoulda came and got them 20 years ago. Oprah might be a little too old or a little too rich to relate to that.

What's one toy you have that no one else in the world does?
Mac10handler, Bristol, TN

I can't say no one else, 'cause there's nothing I can get that ain't never been got before. But some really rare toy? I got a 2006 SLR McLaren. It was the fastest car on earth at one point, but I think there's a faster Bugatti now. Out of my 20 cars, it's the most expensive: It cost me $600,000.



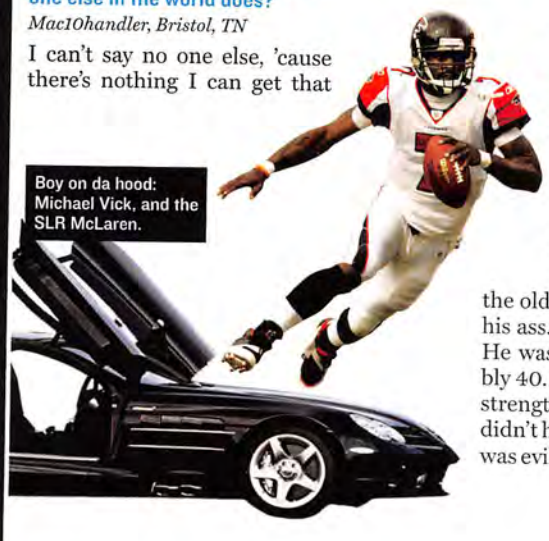
Love/hate (from top): With off-and-on girlfriend Tameka "Tiny" Cottle; rival Lil' Flip.

Which presidential candidate are you pulling for in '08?
xSugaMamax, Pembroke Pines, FL

There are two people I think would be the most credible, based on their body of work, and that would be Hillary Clinton and Rudy Giuliani. Look at Giuliani and the work he did in New York. And Hillary takes time for the little people, just like Bill did. Of course, you got Barack Obama, and it's a great idea to have a black president. But right now, we need someone that's guaranteed to work.

What's the most evil thing you've ever done?
Inspircreation, Girard, PA

When I get mad, I have an inability to listen to reason. I could be out in the middle of Times Square with a pistol on someone. My publicist could be like, "Man, you got a pistol out in the middle of Times Square!" And I'd be like, "Fuck that! This nigga tried me!" I remember one story ... I can't say this was the most evil, but it was pretty bad: When I was about 15, me and my friends were at this gas station trying to buy beer. It was midnight—we clearly shoulda been at home, sleeping for school, but we were full-time drug dealers. So we approached this guy outside to try and get him to buy the beer for us. And while we were talking to him, one of my homeboys was fucking with the dog he had with him, throwing rocks, whatever. So the old man says, "Leave my dog alone!" The first thing we say was, "Fuck you *and* this dog, old man. What of it?" So the old man put his dukes up. And we beat his ass. [Laughs.] I mean, he was a junkie. He wasn't, like, on a cane—he was probably 40. We were just beginning to learn our strengths, and he was just losing his. We didn't hurt him too bad—he didn't die. That was evil. But it was fun, too. [BLENDER]



Boy on da hood: Michael Vick, and the SLR McLaren.

FROM TOP: FRANK MULLEN/WIREIMAGE; JOHN SCUILLI/WIREIMAGE; PIERRE DUCHARME/REUTERS.

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ATTACK OF THE AWESOME

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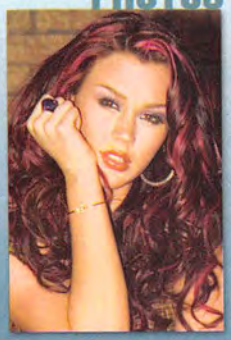

FESTIVALS

FAKE CELEBS

AFRIKA BAMBAATAA AND THE SOULSONIC FORCE

"Planet Rock"

How an original gangsta sent hip-hop into orbit (BY CHRIS NORRIS)

IN THE EARLY '70s, Afrika Bambaataa's native South Bronx was an urban-blighted battle zone. Isolated by the new Cross Bronx Expressway, it suffered rising crime and ruinous "white flight," with arson claiming whole blocks and gangs nearly every other. At first, the burly teen counted himself among the latter, eventually joining the violent Black Spades. But after an eye-opening trip to Africa, he renamed himself Afrika Bambaataa (his original name is, romantically enough, unknown), formed the activist Zulu Nation and by decade's end had, like Kool Herc before him, taken on a role suggestive of a rather central figure in the Bible. Respected DJ, community leader and assembler of the largest parties in the South Bronx, he was prime mover of the burgeoning culture that became hip-hop. And Bambaataa looked upon hip-hop. And saw that it was Good.

JULY 1982
25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

In 1979, the Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight" introduced America to "rap," but Bambaataa's vision went beyond uptown dudes in fringed leather outfits talking in rhythm over disco. Marshaling the '80s cultural mash-up of artists, movie stars, punks and B-boys in downtown clubs like the Roxy, he wasn't thinking New York, America or even Earth. He was thinking universal. Literally. "Some thought there'd be race riots," Bambaataa tells *Blender*. "But it was people coming together to get funky. It was like Sly Stone said, 'Everybody Is a Star.'"

Bambaataa put his Lens Crafters gift card to good use.

AN EPIC FANFARE FOR THE PAC-MAN, MACINTOSH, ELECTRO-BOOGIE '80S.

Having produced "Zulu Nation Throwdown" for homies the SoulSonic Force, Bambaataa was ready to head for outer space. Which meant, as it often does, Germany. Struck one day in 1982 by a Kraftwerk album cover, he bought the LP and decided, "Whoa, I got to *jam* this."

Envisioning a mix of the techno-Krauters' "Trans-Europe Express" and "Numbers," with break beats from funk band Captain Sky and rock group Babe Ruth, Bambaataa returned to the studio with Tommy Boy producer Arthur Baker and synth ace John Robie. Robie performed the "Trans-Europe Express" theme on an E-MU, while Bambaataa and Baker, Bambaataa recalls, "just funked up the place." Bambaataa's clubwear was already a techno-Druid update of Bootsy Collins (shades, cowls, spear, magic helmet), and he briefed three SoulSonic MCs on the song's sci-fi theme: "I was thinking about extraterrestrials and subterranean worlds like Agartha and Shambhala." The result was an epic fanfare for the *Pac-Man*, Macintosh, electro-boogie '80s.

And, *whoot*, as they say, there it was. With one single, hip-hop turned into the sound of pop's near future, spawning not just electro but also every up-tempo electronic dance style that has emerged in the quarter-century since, from techno to house to Miami bass. It even hit Compton, California, inspiring a then little-known DJ named Dr. Dre.

That same year, Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five released rap's supposed first "message" song (being *titled* "The Message" didn't hurt that rep), but "Planet Rock" had its own message: A peacemaking gangbanger had surmounted his grim surroundings to deliver a manifesto of intergalactic inclusiveness. Bambaataa went on to record with John Lydon, Boy George, UB40 and others, proving the phrase "hip-hop purist" an oxymoron. "Guys who say, 'I'm just a hip-hop DJ,'" he says, "don't know jack crap what hip-hop is." [BLENDER]

Vital Statistics

Song "Planet Rock"
Artist Afrika Bambaataa & the SoulSonic Force
Label Tommy Boy
Performers Bambaataa (*turntables, vocals*), Pow Wow (*vocals*), MC G.L.O.B.E. (*vocals*)
Writers Bambaataa, Arthur Baker, John Robie, Alonzo Williams, John Miller and Robert Allen
Producers Bambaataa, Baker, Robie
Chart debut July 17, 1982
Highest chart position R&B: 4; Pop: 48

DAVID CORIO; INSET: JILL FURMANOVSKY.

PROVEN TO REMOVE STAINS AND WHITEN TEETH

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ASK BLENDER

(Solving Your Pop Conundrums Since 2001)

Was RONNIE VAN ZANT really buried in a NEIL YOUNG T-shirt?

Joel Truitt, Myrtle Beach, SC

Nope—but he would have gotten a kick out of people thinking so. That myth started circulating soon after Van Zant, the singer for good-time Southern rockers Lynyrd Skynyrd, was killed in a 1977 plane crash. As the story goes, Van Zant requested that he be laid to rest in a Neil Young shirt in order to curse the Canadian rocker—the final diss in a long-running feud that began with Young's Dixie-baiting 1970 hit "Southern Man" and reached its peak with Skynyrd's famous bitch-slap in "Sweet Home Alabama" ("I hope Neil Young will remember/A Southern man don't need him round anyhow").

The truth is, though, Young and the Skynyrd guys were good friends. Young occasionally covered "Sweet Home Alabama" live, and he'd been planning to appear with Skynyrd before Van Zant's untimely death. Van Zant, meanwhile, often wore Young T-shirts onstage—and sports one on the cover of Skynyrd's *Street Survivors*, the album released just three days before his passing.

Interestingly, in 2000, vandals broke into the mausoleums of both Van Zant and Steve Gaines, the Skynyrd guitarist killed in the same plane crash, in what some believe was an (unsuccessful) attempt to prove the T-shirt rumor. Family members later moved the pair's remains to an undisclosed location.

Me confused: MIMS is hot? Or fly? Or both? Wha?

Ahmed Turner, Evanston, IL

"This Is Why I'm Hot," that inescapable hit from the New York rapper Mims, hinges on one elegantly simple logical formulation: "I'm hot 'cause I'm fly/You ain't 'cause you not." We asked Professor Josh Dever, a specialist in the philosophy of logic at the University of Texas at Austin, to help us break it down.

According to the first line, Professor Dever says, "flyness is what's called a 'sufficient condition' for hotness"—in other words, simply being fly is enough to make one hot. It's the same as positing that if something is a cat, it must also be a mammal. Or, as René Descartes might have phrased it, "I'm fly; therefore, I'm hot."

On the other hand, not all mammals are cats. So is it possible for something to be hot without also being fly? The second line says no. "You ain't [hot]," Mims raps, "'cause you not [fly]." Thus, being fly, says Professor Dever, is also a *necessary* condition for hotness. Hotness and flyness, therefore, are what is known as "logically equivalent": They might not mean the same thing exactly, but it's impossible to have one without the other. A person can be hot if *and only if* he is also fly, and vice versa. In other words, you might be a lot of things—dope, fresh, ill—but if you're not fly ... well, sorry, son. You ain't hot.

Maybe Mims is hot 'cause he's wearing two shirts.

I just bought a copy of DAVID BOWIE's *Ziggy Stardust*, and I noticed a familiar name on that yellow sign on the cover: "K. West." Did David Bowie predict the rise of KANYE?

Sean Romo, Aurora, CO

The Thin White Duke was always ahead of the curve, but he wasn't *that* good. The glowing K. WEST sign on the cover of Bowie's 1972 masterpiece was not, in fact, a tribute to the great Kanyeezy, who wouldn't be born for another five years, but the name of an English fur distributor.

Bowie posed under the sign by chance one rainy night on a London backstreet. The photographer later colorized the black-and-white shot to give the image a kind of otherworldly, sci-fi feel—fitting for an album about an alien rock star who'd crash-landed on Earth. (That some fans thought "K. West" was a coded spelling of "quest" only added to the extraterrestrial mystique.) After the album's release, the furrier's office—located at No. 23 Heddon Street, near Piccadilly Circus, in the heart of London—went on to become Bowie's own Abbey Road, as fans from all over the world flocked to have their pictures taken striking his pose. These days, though, the shop has been closed for decades, and the sign went MIA when a fan stole it in 1982. Bowie calls it "a shame."

ASK BLENDER
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1040 Sixth Avenue
15th Floor, New York, NY 10018

Please include your first and last name, your hometown and your state or province.

Keepin' it Rio: The Stones at Copacabana!

In terms of attendance, what was the BIGGEST ROCK CONCERT ever?

Melissa Aragon, Oakland, CA

Not surprisingly, there's a direct correlation between "well attended" and "free." (You cheap bastards.) Sometimes this has meant paid festivals that were free de facto because everyone just decided to crash them, like the twin giants of hippie-era communality: 1969's Woodstock (400,000 attendees) and 1970's Isle of Wight (600,000). Other times the freeness was planned, as with three concerts in New York's Central Park: Simon and Garfunkel's 1981 reunion (500,000), Garth Brooks's 1997 HBO special (750,000) and, most surprisingly, a 1986 performance by the New York Philharmonic (800,000).

But when it comes to ginormous parties, nobody throws down like the Brazilians.

A February 2006 Rolling Stones concert a week before Carnival drew an estimated 1.5 million *brasileros* to Rio de Janeiro's famed Copacabana Beach. And a decade earlier on the same stretch of sand, Rod Stewart set what is claimed to be the all-time record, playing a New Year's Eve 1994 blowout for an estimated 3.5 million beachgoers. That's a lot of thongs.

One guy did for a week. See Marc's story at **NissanUSA.com**

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WHEN THINGS IN THEIR HOMETOWN TURNED SOUR, ROCK'S MIGHTIEST DUO, THE WHITE STRIPES, DECIDED TO GET THE HECK OUT OF DODGE. SO THEY CASHED IN THEIR CHIPS, MOVED DOWN TO NASHVILLE AND SET ABOUT RETHINKING EVERYTHING THEY EVER KNEW ABOUT MAKING MUSIC

By JON DOLAN

Photographs by DANIELLE LEVITT

ILLUSTRATION BY MORNING BREATH, INC.

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What's black and white and red all over? A penguin with a diaper rash. And the White Stripes and their chair.

JACK WHITE is friends with Bob Dylan, has dated a movie star and is married to a British supermodel. His rock-star life has been so excellent, you'd think he sold his soul to the devil. In fact, he sold it to an old Polish man in a dress.

On September 19, 1987, Pope John Paul II rolled through Detroit for the final stop on a historic sweep through the States. He preached to more than 100,000 people that day, including Aretha Franklin, Vice President Bush and the Gillis family, devout Catholics who drew their daily bread in the employ of the church. Mrs. Gillis hoped to take home something more personal than a blurry Polaroid, so she maneuvered in close enough to make actual papal contact, presenting him with the youngest of her 10 children. "She told him we had the same first name," the former John Gillis recalls. The vicar of Christ smilingly embraced the future guitar-rock savior. "You can't do better than that," he says.

It isn't easy to determine exactly what influence this meeting might have had on young John, better known to his family and friends as Jack. But it was definitely early in life that he first fixed upon his own version of the Blessed Trinity: the colors blood red, heavenly white and mortal black. As a teen, plying the simple tools of a humble carpenter (well, an upholsterer, anyway), he learned to value hard work and honesty, hungering for authenticity with a passion lacking in his irony-soaked generation. When it came time to offer up his artistic vision, Jack chose an ancient instrument, the guitar, to perform a sacred music, the blues. While his contemporaries gravitated to computer beats and, as he puts it, "video games and marijuana bongs," he denied himself such slothful indulgences. He denied himself all kinds of things, in fact: the ease of mixing an album on an iMac, the convenience of a cell phone, or a bass player.

And now, 10 years and 10 million albums sold later, he's beginning to wonder: Was all that self-denial worth it? Did it get in the way of being the best Jack White he could be? And finally, how will he know which wireless plan is right for him?

"I get punished for my honesty," Jack White says. "People will say, 'Jack, do you own a cell phone?' And I say, 'No, I don't have a cell phone, and I don't really believe in them.' Then people will read that and say, 'Well, I have a cell phone, and I'm not an asshole. Does Jack White hate me then? Well, fine, I hate the White Stripes.' Then people start assuming I'm back home churning my own butter, and so the next thing is to try to catch me being a hypocrite. Now I'm just gonna say, 'Yeah, I own a cell phone. And I *love* it.'"

Jack and his fictional sister, actual ex-wife and full-time drummer Meg, are sitting in a little room in the nicest hotel in Nashville. Jack moved here in 2005, shortly after marrying his current wife, model Karen Elson. He's done away with the glam mortician look he was sporting a couple years back. He's still a man in black (jeans, T-shirt, boots), but his hair is chopped to something resembling the boyishly tussled goth bob he had when the band first blew up with the 2002 hit "Fell in Love With a Girl."

The preternaturally shy Meg (black jeans, white tank top) is sitting cross-legged on the couch, shoes off, a pack of Camels in easy reach. She sits tilted toward Jack, as if hoping questions will bank off her and over to him, whereupon he'll bat them away like pesky gnats.

Jack likes answering for two anyway. He's got a lot of mind to unburden: "I worry about whether or not my kids will know what it's like to open vinyl"; "How can you not consider the perceptions of those who encounter your creativity? Do you think Michelangelo didn't care if people saw the Sistine Chapel?"; "I always look back and wish I'd been a goth when I was younger."

He claims he gets in trouble by not giving the canned, *Entertainment Tonight* answers. "Because I have strong opinions, people are going to hate me for what I have to say," he declares. And yet because he's an open, earnest Midwestern guy who values his work, and because the work he does involves answering questions, and because once he starts rolling he can't turn it off, he can't help but be more open than he'd sometimes like. He'll put up a wall of cool, his coal-black eyes searing a hole in your forehead. But hit a hot button—irony vs. truth, entertainment vs. culture, Stripes vs. indie-rock hipsters, Jack vs. Detroit—and he's a pumped-up piston, slamming his points home with a rat-a-tat laugh that echoes off the walls.

> ♠
> **"I GET PUNISHED FOR MY HONESTY."**
> JACK WHITE

The hottest of Jack's hot buttons right now is *Icky Thump*, the band's sixth CD and the first made in what Jack calls "a real, modern studio." They spent three weeks making the album, the longest session of their career by a full week. For a band that famously recorded its biggest album, 2003's *Elephant*, on equipment that predated the Kennedy assassination, this was a major concession to modernity.

"I've come to the conclusion that the limitations we've inflicted on ourselves mean nothing to 95 percent of the people who hear our music," Jack says. "I am not part of the hipster, underground independent culture anymore. When it comes to what studio we choose or how long we spend in it, those things don't matter to a guy listening in his car. I don't want to be the poster boy for wax cylinders. We could do ourselves a service by letting ourselves breathe a little easier."

In fact, the utterly nutso *Icky Thump* suggests people not just breathing easier, but also huffing goofy fumes. The Stripes are still a two- >>

♥ ♠ ♦ ♣

Buttercup liked the White Stripes' brash take on garage rock. But mostly, she was there for the sugar cubes.

PIPE DREAMS

On *Icky Thump*, the White Stripes add the bagpipe to their musical arsenal. Yonkers, New York, piper Patrick Martens demonstrates how you, too, can get your Scot on

1 / STUDY UP

"First you need a qualified instructor—the bagpipe isn't something you can learn using a book. You'll start with a practice chanter, to learn your scales and some tunes. Slight variations in fingering can produce unwanted screeches. Blow too hard and the reed won't oscillate right; blow too soft and you'll get gurgles."

2 / GET A GRIP

"Fit the bag snugly under your left armpit, between your elbow and rib cage. There are five pipes attached to it: The blowstick goes in your mouth; the chanter, which you play with both hands, hangs in front of your belly; and the three drones, which give the instrument its hum, lean on your left shoulder."

3 / BLOW IT

"The pressure coming out of your lungs has to match the pressure being exerted on the bag. Alternate between blowing and squeezing—while you're squeezing, you're breathing for yourself, and the air you're forcing from the bag keeps the pipes going. So the bag acts like a third lung."

4 / MARCH ON

"Marching is just coordinated walking. It's good to practice with a metronome. A lot of guys, when they join a pipe band, get this pageantry idea stuck in their head and start marching right foot/right arm, then left foot/left arm—like Frankenstein's monster. It's really funny to watch." *Mark Yarm*

piece rock band. Their primary weapons are Jack's searing guitar playing and sharecropper shrieking, and Meg's pummeling, kiddie–Led Zeppelin drumming. Timbaland was not involved in *Icky Thump*, and no laptops were opened at any point during its making. But it does have a Patti Page cover that sounds like something from a '50s Broadway musical ("We love show tunes," exclaims Jack), a trippy prog-rock synth solo, a honky-tonk ballad and their first openly political lyrics (the Stripes are not down with Lou Dobbs). It also features a couple of cameos (bagpiper Jim Drury and a mariachi trumpet player, Regulo Aldama, whom Jack discovered in a local Mexican restaurant).

Jack says *Icky Thump* is about "feeling positive about being alive, taking deep breaths and just being really, really happy." This freedom is mildly shocking following the dark songs of courtship and heartache on 2005's *Get Behind Me Satan*, an album many read as a chronicle of Jack's breakup with actress Renée Zellweger. Jack's journey to his happy place was indeed tough. Along the way he suffered what he calls a "mental breakdown." Yet, it wasn't the loss of a girlfriend who may or may not have temporarily completed him that blindsided him, but a long and painful severing of his connection to the ideas he'd clung to, the town he grew up in and the scene that got him his start.

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> **"PEOPLE ASSUME I'M HOME CHURNING MY OWN BUTTER."**
> JACK WHITE

♥ ♠ ♦ ♣

HARBORING, AS EVERY Detroiter does, a resentment against the auto industry that shipped off jobs and left its once-great center in ruins, the last thing Jack White ever wanted to do was follow their lead, abandon the motor city and move his personal industrial complex to warmer climes. In fact, his dream would have been to catalyze a rock scene that would bring back some of the town's luster. And initially, that's just what happened.

Detroit's garage-rock revival scene had been thriving for years but had received little Seattle-style media attention until the White Stripes, with their combination of catchy bomp and primal thrust, tweaked the formula.

In 2001, *White Blood Cells* put the once-formidable Detroit Rock City back on the national map, and its follow-up, *Elephant*, featuring the elephantine hit "Seven Nation Army," catapulted the Stripes to international stardom. Suddenly, major labels descended to wine and dine the natives. Jack produced the big-label debut by the most promising of the local acts, the Von Bondies. On tour in foreign lands, he'd play goodwill ambassador, draping the stage in gigantic City of Detroit flags. He used his fame to help pals like the Dirtbombs and the Paybacks get national shine, compiling an album of hometown bands, *Sympathetic Sounds of Detroit*.

But the moment busted almost as quickly as it boomed. The Von Bondies album tanked, the media attention turned away and the only people left with any cachet were the Stripes, who kept getting bigger and bigger. The ensuing backlash was brutal and swift. Musicians they'd once brought on tour gossiped behind their backs, friendships disintegrated, old drinking haunts became enemy territory.

"I saw some pretty undignified stuff go down," says Wendy Case, singer and guitarist of the Paybacks and an acquaintance of both Stripes. "Jack and Meg may have even opened themselves up to some of it by being so generous."

In 2003, a vicious bar fight with Jason Stollsteimer of the Von Bondies led to misdemeanor assault and battery charges against Jack. Later that year another local collaborator, Jim Diamond, sued the White Stripes, claiming he was "instrumental" in shaping the band's sound and demanding part ownership on copyrights to the band's first two albums, 1999's *The White Stripes* and 2000's *De Stijl*.

As Jack describes it, they got "burned." "I never considered myself God's chosen angel," he begins. "If I never paid someone for opening for us, or didn't split the T-shirt money, then maybe I'd deserve it. But I never did that," he says. "Regardless of how anything went down with my friends, the end result ripped me apart ... I'm the youngest of 10 kids. I know what it's like to share. I'm all about collaborations, and that was heartbreaking.

"Sad to say, I'm not as trusting as I used to be," he continues, surveying the wreckage. "That's sort of the mantra of a damaged person," he laughs. "But I don't sit around wishing I had more friends."

The internal tug-of-war between bolting and "making it work" was intense. Jack even briefly considered dropping out of rock society entirely, perhaps moving to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, or somewhere in Mississippi, deeper into the "real America," where he could go back to upholstery, >>

PREVIOUS SPREADS: STYLING: MARJAN MALAKPOUR FOR MARGARET MALDONADO. PROP STYLING: RUBY GUIDARA. GROOMING: MEGAN THOMPSON. CLOTHING. (WITH RED CHAIR): ON JACK: SUIT: MARC JACOBS; SHIRT: MANUEL; ON MEG: COAT: MARTIN MARGIELA; SHIRT: ALT AT FRED SEGAL LOS ANGELES; JEANS: RADCLIFFE. (WITH HORSE): ON JACK: BLAZER: GAULTIER PUISSANCE DEUX; JEAN PAUL GAULTIER RHYTHME NO 1 HUMM; SHIRT: MANUEL; ON MEG: COAT: MARC JACOBS; VEST: COSTRA NOSTRA LA; SHOES: TAHIP. PHOTOS: [illegible]

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Threat level red: Live at L.A.'s Troubadour in 2004.

the trade he learned as a teen.

Nashville was as far south as he got, a perfect middle ground between the music world and the ever-vanishing real America he loves (he fell for Music City while producing Loretta Lynn's Grammy-winning 2004 album, *Van Lear Rose*). Jack put his Detroit home on public auction ("Nobody really wants a mansion in the ghetto," he learned), and Meg pulled up stakes, too, moving to Los Angeles, leaving the D and as she says, "so much baggage," in the permanent rearview.

♥ ♠ ♦ ♣

IT'S THE KIND of rainy night in Nashville that might inspire an alcoholic Music Row hack to write a song about a train, or a murder, or a murder on a train. The White Stripes are sitting at a corner table in a downtown bar. Meg sips a bourbon. Jack's clad all in red, and his black fingernails are wrapped around a Havana Sidecar, something involving triple sec and rum that looks a bit like active lava.

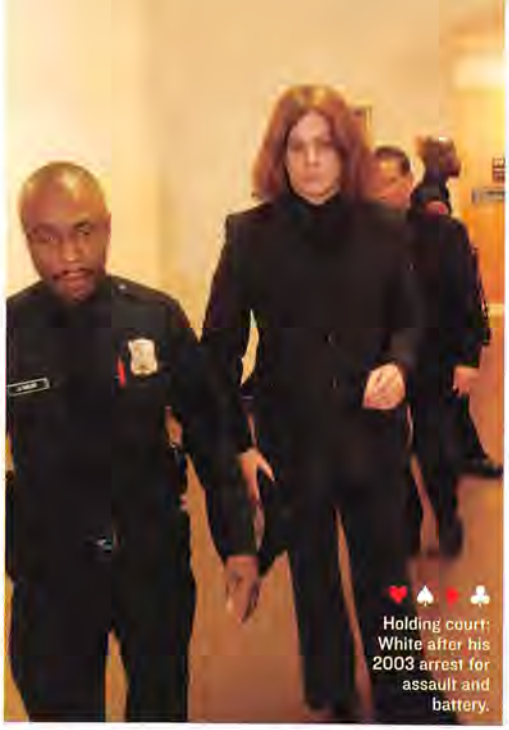
Though 2,000 miles separate them now, after all those years in the van and on stage together, they interact telepathically, like old marrieds who haven't needed language for a decade or so. Jack swizzles his straw and grins, acknowledging that since getting out of Dodge, life has, for the most part, taken a turn for the better.

In 2005, while shooting the suggestive, sepulchral video to *Get Behind Me Satan*'s "Blue Orchid," he met model Karen Elson. Three weeks later, while on tour in Brazil, they were married. Meg was the maid of honor. "Someone mentioned you can get married on the cusp of a black-and-white river," says Jack, referring to the exotic spot where they exchanged vows. "It was perfect. That made us even more certain that it was the right thing to do."

The tour for *Get Behind Me Satan* was a cleansing transition. He started it while still immersed in "the culture" of hip Detroit indie rock—and finished somewhere else entirely.

"I moved to Nashville without knowing anybody. My friends were my wife, Meg and the Raconteurs," he says, referring to his don't-call-it-a-side-project with power-pop singer-songwriter Brendan Benson that became a surprise success last year. "It was refreshing and a little scary. But I loved it. You don't look back."

The newlyweds considered buying a house once owned by Johnny Cash, deciding against it because, Jack says, he didn't want to be a "caretaker." They settled instead in a stately white home (they painted the door red) in the nicest neighborhood in town, and now they've got country superstars instead of bitter garage rockers for neighbors, a 1-year-old daughter, Scarlett Teresa, and another kid on the way.



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Holding court: White after his 2003 arrest for assault and battery.

"When I walk around down South—and this is not any kind of comment as far as people's religiosity or whatever—I just get a feeling even strangers are willing to do the right thing," he says. "I'm pretty safe in assuming that if I fell down with a heart attack, within seconds, someone would call an ambulance."

This is Jack White the moralist, the one who has been known to lament the loss of showbiz's bygone values: class, grace and Old Hollywood–style privacy (Cate Blanchett gets his nod; Paris Hilton, not so much). It's the Jack who considers Meg the "heart" of the Stripes. Some have read this encomium as an ironic reference to her willfully primitive drumming, but it's also an allusion to her dignified reclusiveness, her rigorous policing of the line between public and private. "I live in a cave," she says with mock horror. "Normal life stuff doesn't have anything to do with band stuff." It shouldn't matter who she's dating or that she briefly attended culinary school or that she writes her own songs or that she wishes there were more historical novels with the rich detail of *The Devil in the White City*. She's more interested in mystery, sealed in what she calls the safe "little world" of her band.

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> "I MOVED TO NASHVILLE WITHOUT KNOWING ANYBODY. MY FRIENDS WERE MY WIFE, MEG AND THE RACONTEURS."
> JACK WHITE

"In this day and age, every band wants to say, 'Come look at what we do,' all the time," Jack says. "You wanna see me in my underwear? You wanna film me while I'm sleeping? America has traded culture for entertainment and technology. How can you ever come back from that?"

Jack has always had a Hollywood side, but he's more interested in playing with the tinsel than lunching in the town. He might be married to a model, but she's a model who'd rather spend time on her politically attuned cabaret troupe, the Citizens Band, than jetting to Milan for runway work. He won't appear on the red carpet for a movie he isn't in or offer a song to a soundtrack if it didn't appear in the film it's tied to, but he loves smart, satiric spectacle tinged with silly gimmickry. He wanted the video for "There's No Home for You Here" to involve Philip Seymour Hoffman playing Thomas Edison and an electrocuted elephant (their label wouldn't foot the bill). Jack will also be playing Elvis in a parody of *Walk the Line*, starring John C. Reilly. "It's easy," he insists. "Everybody can do a three-second Elvis impression."

Elvis Presley would have found a lot to like in Jack White. "Singers come and go," Elvis once said. "But if you're a good actor, you can last a long time." Long before he ever stepped in front of a camera, Jack proved his acting chops by forming the greatest fake band since Kiss, inventing a mythical kingdom he and his kid sister could rule like royals against enemy invasion. And now it's existed for 10 years. To commemorate the occasion, the White Stripes hope to hit each of the 16 states (most of them red) they've never played. The Raconteurs will release another album, and Jack will also contribute to a Bob Dylan–curated compilation for which artists will write songs based on unfinished lyrics left behind by Hank Williams. One of them, titled "Then Came That Fateful Day," was found in the car in which the country legend died 54 years ago. Turning 10? Playing the King? Ghostwriting for Hank? It's enough to get any 32-year-old rock star thinking about his (gulp) legacy.

"If you would've asked me our first year if we'd make it, I'd have said 'no way.' But we did, so I have to say we'll make it to 20," Jack says. "You've got to read the room you want to play for." And what room is that? Jack doesn't miss a beat. "Planet Earth." [BLENDER]

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MADE IN ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

AFTER A TEEN-POP DEBUT, A BAD BREAKUP AND TWO LABEL BATTLES, HOLLYWOOD SWEETHEART MANDY MOORE IS BACK AS ... A CRUNCHY SINGER-SONGWRITER? "THIS IS MY LAST CHANCE," SHE CONFESSES

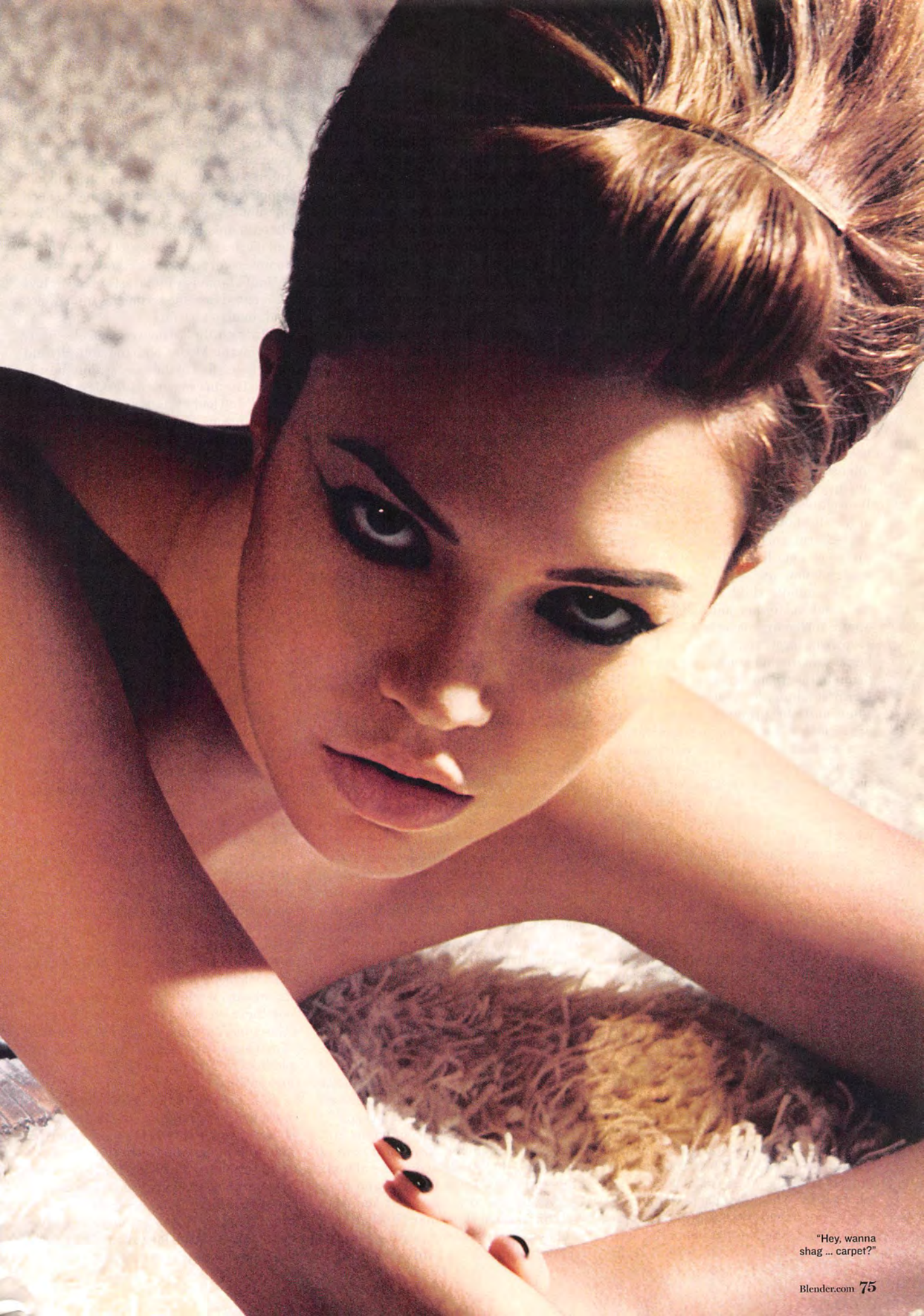
By MEREDITH KAHN ROLLINS *Photographs by* NICOLAS MOORE

MANDY MOORE IS standing in the middle of an art gallery in Chelsea, New York, gazing perplexedly at an enormous canvas. Understandably: It depicts nude people strung with IVs, monkeys in cages and a dying shark on the floor. It's a gorgeous Saturday, and the place is packed with art-fiend hipsters and bespectacled aficionados, and nobody—literally nobody, not even a Japanese camera crew—is paying Moore the slightest mind. It's not like she didn't make an entrance, with her surprising height, her aura of celebrity perfection, her cascade of auburn hair and the whopping knee-high black cast she's wearing on her right leg (the result of a fractured ankle), which hitches her walk with a dramatic limp. But the pop singer turned actress seems to have plunked down exactly in the center of her least-likely demographic.

Moore hunches her shoulders, uncomfortable-teenager style, and gimps into the second room of the gallery. Another crowd of serious people; again, no flicker of recognition. She seems to relax. And then she gets to the final room. There are four skinny African-American kids—boys, 13 or 14 years old, tops—clustered around an oil painting of a man's naked torso and hairy groin. Moore stares at its companion piece, a portrait of a nude woman, and sighs, mystified, "I just don't know the rules of art." The kids start murmuring, conferring among themselves. As Moore turns and walks out, one of the kids trots out behind her, then yells, "Hey! You Mandy Moore?"

Everyone is weirdly still. Moore tucks her chin into her shoulder, half come-hither, half dying of embarrassment, and says, "Mm-hmm." She hobbles out to the sidewalk, the kid in hot pursuit. He thrusts a piece of paper her way and asks for an autograph. With an enormous smile, she chirps, "Of course!" and signs it TO MALCOLM, LOVE MANDY, flourished with a big, script-y heart.

And here is the strange state of Mandy Moore, the most lovable of all the teen chicklets hatched in the late-'90s Orlando-based pop-music boom. Ask a grown-up, and they might have some inkling of who she is—didn't I see that Diane Keaton bomb *Because I Said So* >>



"Hey, wanna shag ... carpet?"

on an airplane?—but she's not exactly in their mainstream. Ask anyone who was stuck in high school at the turn of the millennium and they can rattle off Moore's most famous accomplishments: her MTV staples—the teensploitation breakthrough "Candy" and the treacly "I Wanna Be With You"—and her starring role as a tragic leukemia girl in the pubescent love story *A Walk to Remember*. But it's the grown-ups whom Moore, 23, is setting her sights on now. It's the grown-ups for whom she's writing music. And it's the grown-ups who will determine whether Mandy Moore is going to be a musical somebody—or just another pretty actress with a hobby.

Her new CD, the aptly titled *Wild Hope*, is a determinedly adult singer-songwriter record that evokes Lilith Fair more than *TRL*: strummy guitars, melancholic keyboards, gently rocking Americana drums, intense lyrics about breaking up and standing on your own two solid, womanly feet. It's well-played, well-meaning, fair-trade-only-coffeehouse music, performed with a shy charm, and just about as far away as Moore can get from the bubblegum that made her famous.

The middle child of an airline-pilot dad and a former-journalist mom, Moore got her first recording deal at age 14, when a local FedEx employee heard her at an Orlando studio and sent her demo to his friend, an A&R rep for Epic. Her first album, *So Real*, was released in 1999, and she promptly began touring with fellow Floridian juggernauts 'N Sync and the Backstreet Boys. "I went straight from watching them on *TRL* to opening for them in front of 20,000 people," she says with amazement. "I don't know where that confidence came from—and I don't know where it went."

Moore was always the awkward-little-sister figure in the oversexed-teen-star pantheon. She didn't have the breathy bustiness of a Jessica Simpson, the taut abs of a Britney Spears or the tiny, porny proportions of a Christina Aguilera. And yet in her first video, for "Candy," she works the camera in a way that's almost upsettingly suggestive, with heavy-lidded upward glances and a pout. She says, "It's funny: I think that was my sexiest time, at 15—my gawky body, swaying like a little stick figure. My most overtly sexy thing was the first one, right off the bat." She makes a fake-sad face, pulling the sides of her mouth down. "And from there it was *aaallll* covered up."

Over the past few years, Moore has made a habit of ostentatiously ragging on her teen output. "How accountable can you really be when you're a kid in an adult world?" she asks. "There was no way they were going to give me any say over my music or my image at that point. But even at the time, I was like, 'Oh, gosh, I really don't like this song ... '"

After fulfilling her contract at Epic, following the release of the tepidly received *Coverage*—in which she earnestly tackled songs by critical darlings such as Todd Rundgren and Joan Armatrading—Moore signed with Warner Bros. in 2004. But the relationship soured over Moore's new direction (including sessions with respected but little-known singer-songwriters Rachael Yamagata and Lori McKenna), and the two soon parted ways. In a stroke of luck, Moore's breakup with Warner Bros. coincided with the launch of a music-distribution deal between her management company, The Firm, and EMI. So Moore went to work on even more material (she estimates she wrote about 30 songs in all; there are 12 on the CD). Perhaps the most productive collaboration was with the

"I THINK THAT WAS MY SEXIEST TIME—AT 15."

folk-pop duo the Weepies, who contributed five tracks to *Wild Hope*. The Weepies' Deb Talan admits that "when Mandy first came to our house, it was a little odd. You see her picture everywhere, and here she is walking up the steps into our cabin, and we were both like, *eeeeek*!" Moore then settled on a producer, John Alagia, who has done albums with John Mayer, Liz Phair and Dave Matthews. "Given the music industry," Alagia says, "it was brave of her to put herself out there this way."

Moore doesn't think she had much of a choice, in the end: "This is me, and these are my words, and this is my taste in music." Yet she's been around enough to know that being really, really passionate about something doesn't mean the public will buy it. "I feel like in many ways this is my last chance to do a record on this level. If this doesn't work, how many opportunities do I get?"

So she's laid herself all out on the line. She says she suffered through a bout of depression that's reflected in the album's brooding vibe: "I just felt icky and blue. Everything was sort of tweaked, and there was this gradual slope down." While she's politely circumspect about what brought on her bad mood, it's hard not to trace it back to the end of her two-year relationship with actor-director Zach Braff, thanks to lyrics like "I can think of a million ways you proved you weren't the one" and, more pointedly, "I hope you burn in hell." Moore makes a big deal of trying to keep the album's villain a mystery—after all, she dated tennis hottie Andy Roddick, too—but it's clear that she doesn't harbor a lot of fondness for the *Scrubs* star. When asked if Braff's famously indie taste in music had influenced her, she scrunches up her face and simulates barfing.

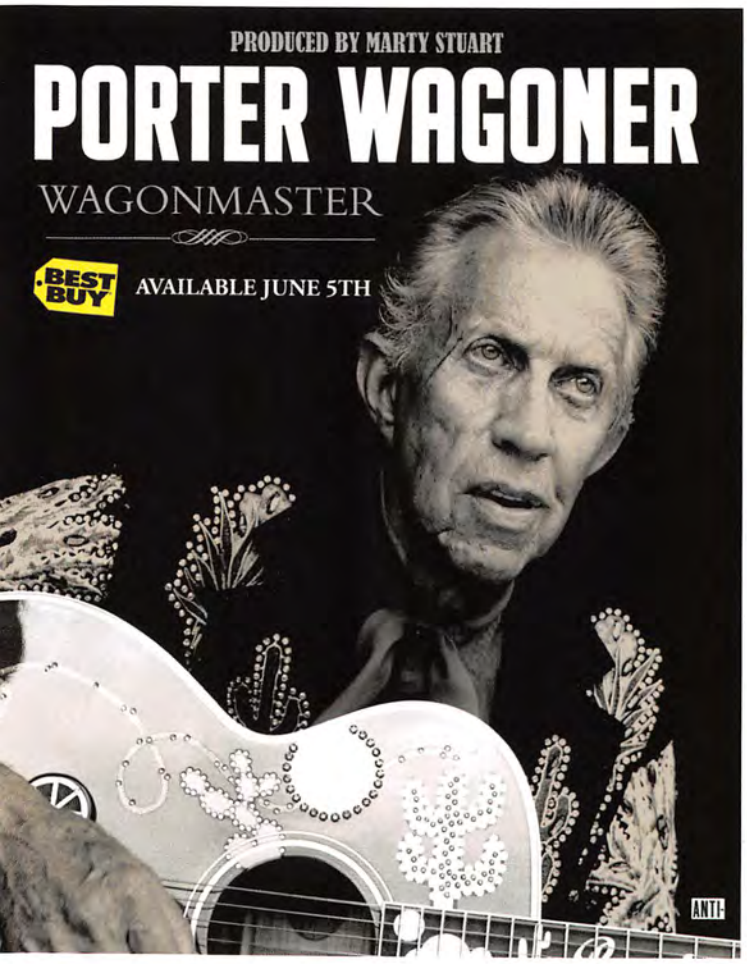
In truth, the last few years have been hit-and-miss for Moore, both romantically and professionally. On the career front, she was praised for her mean-girl-for-Jesus role in *Saved!* and had a successful arc of episodes on *Entourage*. But both of her big-budget films, *American Dreamz* and *Because I Said So*, withered at the box office. Her next movie just might turn the streak around: the buzzed-about romantic comedy *License to Wed*, in which she stars as a bride-to-be opposite *The Office*'s John Krasinski and a newly sober Robin Williams.

On the dating front, she had a brief but public fling with former Nicole Richie fiancé DJ AM. "It was a nanosecond!" she yelps. (She's now dating singer-songwriter Greg Laswell.) And a recent romantic blow was delivered years after the fact, when her teen sweetheart, the actor and diminutive lothario Wilmer Valderrama, told Howard Stern last year that he had taken Moore's virginity and that it wasn't "like warm apple pie." Moore sighs heavily. "That's not a fun thing to have said about you." She and Valderrama have made peace, but she says, "Even now when I think about it, I'm like, Ugh—it's pretty tacky."

Of course, the weirdest thing about that whole incident is how counter it runs to the very authentic-seeming goofy-good-girl image that Moore has maintained throughout her career. "I'm OK with being quiet and boring," she says. But this may also be the dilemma: Despite her recent spate of grown-up problems, she's still seen as America's sweet little sister. Which also, maybe, is why she's so excited about the moody, worldly persona she's putting out there on *Wild Hope*. Take the song "Gardenia," for example. Here's the chorus: "I'm the one who likes gardenia," she sings, plaintively. "I'm the one who likes to make love on the floor."

On the floor! "Maybe it's because I started [in the industry] when I was 15," she says, laughing. "Oh! Making love on the floor is so taboo!" She feigns horror, adorably. "I went from being a child to making love on the floor. There was no intermediate step." Then she lowers her voice, as if promising that there's a whole lot more to her that we have no idea about: "But there was in my real life, I guarantee it." [BLENDER]

Mandy stares intensely at Grimace.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KID A
BOY TOY
DAILY NEWS
ELVIS PRESLEY DIES AT 42
Singer Suffers Heart Attack
Berkowitz Pleads Innocent; Plans Insanity Defense
Report Carter Picks Ala. Judge As FBI Chief

100 October 3, 2000

RADIOHEAD RELEASE *KID A*

Spontaneously, guitar fans everywhere begin weeping.

99 December 11, 1965

THE VELVET UNDERGROUND PLAY THEIR FIRST SHOW

Giving birth to the sound of alternative rock.

98 April 13, 1963

THE KINGSMEN RECORD "LOUIE LOUIE"

When it becomes a hit, everyone assumes singer Jack Ely's incomprehensible mumbling masks obscenity, causing the first panic over dirty lyrics.

97 November 23, 1936

ROBERT JOHNSON'S FIRST RECORDING SESSION

The King of the Delta Blues Singers hooks up with the devil, provides a Rosetta Stone for rock pioneers including Eric Clapton and Keith Richards.

96 December 14, 1977

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER DEBUTS IN NEW YORK

Prompting the inexorable march of polyester suits and disco into the suburbs—and throughout the world.

95 August 21, 1966

THE DOORS PERFORM "THE END" AT L.A.'S WHISKY A GO GO

Jim Morrison's 11-minute-plus nightmare about Oedipal desire, snakes and ancient lakes cements the Doors' Dionysian rep—and earns them a permanent ban from the club.

94 February 1, 2004

"NIPPLEGATE"

The Most Infamous Super Bowl Halftime Ever deep-sixes Janet Jackson's career and ushers in a brave new era of "decency."

PHOTOS, PREVIOUS PAGE

Dylan: Ted Russell/Polaris; Mercury: Rex Usa; Sugarhill Gang: Michael Ochs Archive/Getty Images; Beatles: Bob Gomel/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images; Jackson: Eugene Adebari/Rex Usa; AC/DC: Michael Putland/Retna; Springsteen: Tom Hill/Wireimage; *Do The Right Thing*: Universal/The Kobal Collection; *Scarface*: Universal/The Kobal Collection; Jackson and Timberlake: Michael Seamans/Splash News; Berry: Keith Morris/Redferns/Retna; Clinton: Reed Saxon/AP Photo; *This Is Spinal Tap*: Everett Collection; Madonna: Richard Corkery/*Daily News*; Kiss: Waring Abbott; Bowie: Mick Rock/Retna; Shakur: Bebeto Matthews/AP Photo; Bono: Greg Wigler; 2 Live Crew: Janette Beckman/Retna; Sex Pistols: Keystone/Getty Images; Cobain: Jesse Frohman/Corbis Outline; Ramones: Roberta Bayley/Retna; Plant: Neal Preston/Corbis; Richards: Monitor Picture Library/Retna UK.

93

June 30, 1989

DO THE RIGHT THING HITS THEATERS

Introducing Public Enemy's righteous rage to the world at large, Spike Lee's breakout film practically doubled as a music video for "Fight the Power," which is heard no less than 15 times in the movie.

92 January 31, 1955

RCA DEMONSTRATES FIRST SYNTHESIZER

The room-size machine capable of generating and shaping sounds makes *Abbey Road*, dance music, keytars and Madonna possible.

91 September 8, 1965

CLASSIFIED AD RUNS TO FORM THE MONKEES

The first fictional band was born, presaging Josie and the Pussycats, Gorillaz and the current incarnation of Guns N' Roses.

90 June 18, 1988

DEPECHE MODE SELL OUT THE ROSE BOWL

About 80,000 goths pack the So-Cal stadium—and synth-rock gets its stamp of legitimacy.

89 July 6, 1977

ROGER WATERS SPITS AT A FAN DURING A PINK FLOYD SHOW

The incident would inspire Waters to write *The Wall*, a masterpiece of rock-star alienation and anomie.

88 April 6, 1974

ABBA WIN THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST

Making possible the ascendance of Swedish pop and approximately 18 bajillion drunken wedding dances.

87 October 9, 1999

COACHELLA KICKS OFF

Beginning the annual pilgrimage of alterna-kids to the Sonoran Desert.

86 November 21, 1959

ALAN FREED FIRED IN FIRST PAYOLA SCANDAL

Ending the career of the DJ who invented the term *rock & roll*.

85 July 18, 1991

LOLLAPALOOZA PREMIERES

Introducing the U.S. to the traveling music festival.

84 September 19, 1955

PAT BOONE HITS NO. 1 WITH "AIN'T THAT A SHAME"

With this bleached-out version of Fats Domino's original, Boone becomes the trailblazer for years of Whitey childproofing R&B.

83 January 26, 1995

FIRST MPEG3 PATENT FILED

Turning music loving into a no-strings-attached orgy.

82 March 17, 1958

LINK WRAY INVENTS DISTORTION

The brutal "Rumble" introduces the world to the fuzztone sound.

81 June 15, 1984

SCARFACE TOPS THE VHS RENTALS LIST

Sanctifying hip-hop's Church of Tony Montana.

80 April 14, 1982

KARAOKE ARRIVES IN THE U.S.

At a bar called Dimples in Burbank, California.

79 April 1, 2032

GUNS N' ROSES' *CHINESE DEMOCRACY* RELEASED

Weeks after Axl's death in a tragic tanning-bed accident.

78 May 29, 1983

HEAVY METAL DAY AT THE US FESTIVAL

300,000 head bang to Van Halen and Mötley Crüe, confirming hair metal's arrival.

76 January 1, 1994

MAX MARTIN QUITS CASHIERING, STARTS PRODUCING

Millions of teenage girls feel the sudden urge to squeal.

75 June 27, 1966

FRANK ZAPPA AND THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION RELEASE *FREAK OUT!*

Rock's first concept record.

74 September 9, 1934

"MUZAK" IS REGISTERED AS A TRADEMARK

Elevators, retail stores, restaurants—none would go unmusically accompanied from here on in!

73 December 18, 2005

"LAZY SUNDAY" HITS YOUTUBE

The *SNL* skit helps turn a fledgling video-hosting site into the world's premier time suck.

72 August 31, 1963

THE RONETTES' "BE MY BABY" DEBUTS ON THE CHARTS

Producer Phil Spector's Wall of Sound changes the nature of pop records, from documents of performances to studio creations.

71 November 16, 1985

STARSHIP'S "WE BUILT THIS CITY" REACHES NO. 1

The low-water mark of soul-crushing corporate rock—delivered by the onetime tie-dyed standard bearers of hippiedom.

70 August 12, 1972

WILLIE NELSON PLAYS HIS FIRST SHOW AT AUSTIN'S ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS

Kicks off the Nashville-defying "outlaw country" movement, bringing together gun-rack rednecks, sunbaked hippies and maybe—just maybe—a weed dealer or two.

69 October 1, 1982

THE FIRST COMPACT DISC GOES ON SALE IN JAPAN

Billy Joel's *52nd Street* ushers in the new format, reaping enormous profits for the music industry—but also sowing the seeds of the digital revolution that will bring the biz to its knees 20 years later.

77

October 23, 2002

KANYE WEST'S CAR CRASH

In which hip-hop's best producer-rapper smashes his jaw, finds God and decides to write "Through the Wire," a career-making song about seat-belt safety.

68 July 1, 1979

THE WALKMAN GOES ON SALE

When your kids ask you what those clunky plastic boxes were, you can say: "OGB iPods."

67 January 13, 1969

JÄGERMEISTER REACHES THE U.S.

The after-dinner digestif is eventually adopted by hard-rock bands as the favored facilitator of wanton misbehavior and poor life choices.

66 December 13, 1967

GRATEFUL DEAD DEBUT "DARK STAR"

The live epic that spurs the birth of the jam-band movement.

65 March 30, 1980

VAN HALEN FIND BROWN M&MS BACKSTAGE

After a show at the University of Southern Colorado, in direct contravention of the clause in the band's contract, to be precise. They trash the dressing room, immortalizing the benchmark for all absurd backstage demands.

64 September 26, 1984

DEF JAM RELEASES LL COOL J'S "I NEED A BEAT"

Hip-hop's first powerhouse label and longest-running star both get their starts.

63 March 2, 1984

THIS IS SPINAL TAP RELEASED

Rock bands become self-aware and drummers tread more carefully, particularly when undertaking chores in the garden.

62 December 6, 1969

MEREDITH HUNTER STABBED TO DEATH AT ALTAMONT

Bringing a symbolic end to the optimistic peace-and-love counterculture of the '60s.

61 June 3, 1992

BILL CLINTON BLOWS HIS SAX ON *ARSENIO HALL*

For the first time, a member of the rock & roll generation is on his way to the White House.

60 October 1, 1957

LITTLE RICHARD RENOUNCES ROCK & ROLL FOR THE LORD

Becoming the first rock star to be born again, paving the way for everyone from Al Green to Korn's Brian "Head" Welch.

DO THE RIGHT THING: UNIVERSAL/THE KOBAL COLLECTION; *THIS IS SPINAL TAP*: EVERETT COLLECTION; WEST: ANGELA BOATWRIGHT/RETNA; *SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER*: EVERETT COLLECTION; *SCARFACE*: EVERETT COLLECTION.

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Someone's been watching *Buns of Steel*.

59

June 5, 1983

U2 PLAY RED ROCKS

Despite a torrential downpour, U2 insisted that the show go on at the Colorado amphitheater, an outdoor venue formed by two sandstone megaliths. And for good reason: U2 had committed their life savings to capturing the show on tape for what would become the *Under a Blood Red Sky* concert video. The evening's iconic moment came as Bono waved a large white flag during the political anthem "Sunday Bloody Sunday." When MTV put a clip of this in heavy rotation, it ushered in U2's quarter-century of world domination.

Unintended consequence: ROCK STARS ON *CHARLIE ROSE*

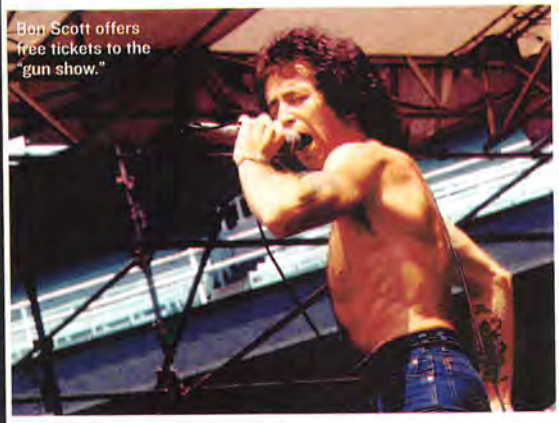
57

June 23, 1987

TIFFANY TOURS MALLS

Stumped by how to promote an album by a 15-year-old whose target audience was too young to even sneak into nightclubs, a desperate record executive suggested Tiffany spend her summer vacation touring the nation's malls. "The Beautiful You: Celebrating the Good Life Shopping Mall Tour '87" catapulted Tiffany to quadruple-platinum sales. In the process, it established the food court as the first stop of choice for many aspiring teen pop stars—including Britney Spears and Avril Lavigne—and opened the industry's eyes to the buying power of millions of tween-age girls.

Unintended consequence: *HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL*



Bon Scott offers free tickets to the "gun show."

58

February 17, 1976

EAGLES RELEASE GREATEST HITS

Disco may have been in ascendance, but the Eagles' compilation nonetheless sold a million copies in 24 days—and has been selling ever since, clocking nearly 30 million record sales in the U.S. alone, making it the most-bought album of all time. The comp's success firmly established baby boomers as rock's cash cow, ensuring that artists who came of age in the '60s and '70s would have lucrative careers that far outlasted their inspiration and, in many cases, even their deaths.

Unintended consequence: "THE HEAT IS ON"

56

February 20, 1980

BON SCOTT DIES

When the AC/DC singer choked on his own vomit in a parked car after a London drinking session, the band's *Highway to Hell* had just grazed the Top 20 and they were really only appreciated by serious headbangers. After recruiting new singer Brian Johnson and releasing *Back in Black*—as a tribute to Scott—five months later, they were the biggest rock band in the world. They never came close to recapturing this crunching Matt Lange-produced manifesto of booze and womanizing, but at 42 million copies sold, this is the hard-rock album that *everyone* owns.

Unintended consequence: POWER CHORDS IN STRIP CLUBS

55

January 1, 1953

HANK WILLIAMS FOUND DEAD IN HIS CADILLAC

The ultimate country-music death also provides the archetype for rock-star martyrs to come, from Jimi to Kurt to Tupac.

54

March 30, 1965

OWSLEY RECEIVES HIS FIRST SHIPMENT OF LYSERGIC MONOHYDRATE

With 800 grams of the raw materials for LSD, Augustus Owsley Stanley III manufactures 300,000 capsules of "White Lightning" acid—legal in California at the time—and turns on the entire West Coast. Hello, psychedelia!

53

January 22, 1972

DAVID BOWIE REVEALS HIS BISEXUALITY IN *MELODY MAKER*

Ziggy Stardust tells a reporter, "Yes, of course I'm gay, and always have been," becoming the first rock star to come out of the closet.

52

January 20, 1982

OZZY OSBOURNE BITES THE HEAD OFF A LIVE BAT

Onstage at a solo show in Des Moines, Iowa, Ozzy's ghoulish nosh establishes him as rock's alpha nutcase—a title yet to be wrested from his trembling grasp.

51

May 19, 1965

PETE TOWNSHEND WRITES "MY GENERATION"

Forced to take the train after the queen has his Packard hearse towed, the Who guitarist uses his commute to author rock's first and greatest endorsement of voluntary euthanasia.

50

November 16, 1965

BILL HAM DEMONSTRATES THE "LIGHT SHOW"

San Francisco visual artist displays "electric action paintings"—soon he'd project them onto the area's frumpy psychedelic bands, forever altering the course of "whoa, trippy"-ness.

49

January 18, 1966

BRIAN WILSON BEGINS WORK ON *PET SOUNDS*

Inspired by the Beatle *Rubber Soul*, the Beach Boys' obsessiv genius transforms po into high art with a concept album of star tling complexity—just one year before he withdraws into a vortex of mental *illness.*

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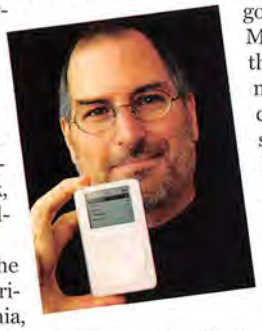
Thanks, come again (in three months, for the cooler, smaller one).

48

October 23, 2001

THE UNVEILING OF THE iPOD

APPLE COMPUTER LAUNCHED the iPod less than six weeks after 9/11, with the dot-com industry in free fall and sales for the Nomad and other MP3 players moping along. "Hundreds of young companies were dying," says tech journalist Michael S. Malone. "Nobody was expecting the first great consumer electronics product of the 21st century." People in Silicon Valley "thought we were insane," recalls Greg Joswiak, VP of worldwide iPod product marketing.



As Apple introduced the device in a packed auditorium on its Cupertino, California, campus, a few VIPs received iPods by courier. "They didn't even trust Federal Express," says Steven Levy, author of *The Perfect Thing: How the iPod Shuffles Commerce, Culture, and Coolness*. White, serene and minimalist, it looked "like a thermostat," he says, and came loaded with about a dozen CDs, including *A Hard Day's Night* and *Nevermind*.

Some gadget freaks snorted derisively that day. Rob Malda, a.k.a. Commander Taco, lord of the influential Slashdot.com message board, wrote: "No wireless. Less space than a Nomad. Lame."

But the biggest nerd of all spotted the possibilities. Two days after he got the iPod, Levy showed it to Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, the most powerful man in technology. "He said, 'This is very cool,'" Levy notes. "And then he said, 'It's only for Macintosh?' He immediately saw it could be of wider appeal."

After sales of 100 million iPods and 2.5 billion songs in the iTunes store, that appeal is undeniable. Where prior players were dowdy or clunky, the iPod's smart design fomented a kind of fetishism—white earbuds were a status symbol, like a coke spoon in the '70s. Apple extended the revolution Thomas Edison had begun: Where vinyl made it possible for people in Peoria or Pretoria to hear the New York Philharmonic whenever they wanted, the iPod let us hear music wherever we wanted. Everyone became a DJ. Everyone could own their own radio station. *Glenn Zorpette*

47

August 1, 1989

THE FBI SENDS A LETTER TO N.W.A

A year after the release of N.W.A's *Straight Outta Compton*, FBI Assistant Director of the Office of Public Affairs Milt Ahlerich wrote their label's parent company, Priority Records, to "take exception" to an unspecified N.W.A song that "encourages violence against and disrespect for the law enforcement officer." That song, of course, was the incendiary anti-cop track "Fuck Tha Police." The feds never took any direct action against N.W.A—but with this vaguely threatening letter, hip-hop came into its own as a source of governmental concern, foreshadowing rising public and political anxiety about the influence of gangsta rap on its increasingly white and suburban fan base.

Unintended consequence: BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS

Kiss or Cirque Du Soleil?

46

January 30, 1973

KISS PERFORM IN FULL MAKEUP

Bassist Gene Simmons and singer Paul Stanley's previous group, Wicked Lester, had played wearing white face paint, but their new band developed this into "personalities"—the Demon (Simmons), the Starchild (Stanley), the Space Ace (guitarist Ace Frehley) and, yes, the Catman (drummer Peter Criss). At the Popcorn Club in Queens, the live debut of the self-proclaimed hottest band in the world was witnessed by a total of three people, but the idea of a band as otherworldly cartoon characters—with merchandise to match—caught on nonetheless.

Unintended consequence: YOUR MOM MAY WELL HAVE HAD SEX WITH GENE SIMMONS

45

May 21, 1992

THE REAL WORLD DEBUTS

The show about seven strangers living together in front of television cameras prompts the gradual disappearance of actual music videos on MTV and gives birth to reality television.

44

April 15, 1981

R.E.M. RECORD "RADIO FREE EUROPE"

Minting the new sound of college rock—jangly guitars and incomprehensible lyrics—that eventually made R.E.M. the biggest cult band in history.

43

August 15, 1955

ELVIS SIGNS WITH "COLONEL" TOM PARKER

Striking a bargain that begins the long slow death of the Hillbilly Cat, the commercialization of rock & roll—and the triumph of The Suit over creativity.

42

July 13, 1985

LIVE AID

A staggering trans-Atlantic lineup and a record-breaking TV audience of 1.5 billion ensures that philanthropy—and U2's record sales—will never be the same again.

41

July 6, 1957

JOHN MEETS PAUL

The teenage music geeks encounter each other when Lennon's group takes part in a village festival; McCartney impresses him by playing "Twenty Flight Rock" on an upside-down guitar, and the partnership that would become the Beatles is born.

40

December 12, 1957

JERRY LEE LEWIS MARRIES HIS 13-YEAR-OLD SECOND COUSIN

And so the Killer extinguishes the early blaze of his career—and creates the first-ever rock scandal.

39

April 7, 1967

THE BIRTH OF FREE-FORM FM RADIO

San Francisco's KMPX pioneers the previously little-used FM band to eschew jingles, playlists and Top 40 singles, thus beginning the spread of the counterculture across the U.S.

APPLE STORE: REUTERS; N.W.A: LFI; KISS: BOB GRUEN; LEWIS: KEVIN HORAN/TIME LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES; R.E.M.: RON WOLFSON/LFI; JOBS: SUSAN RAGAN/REUTERS.

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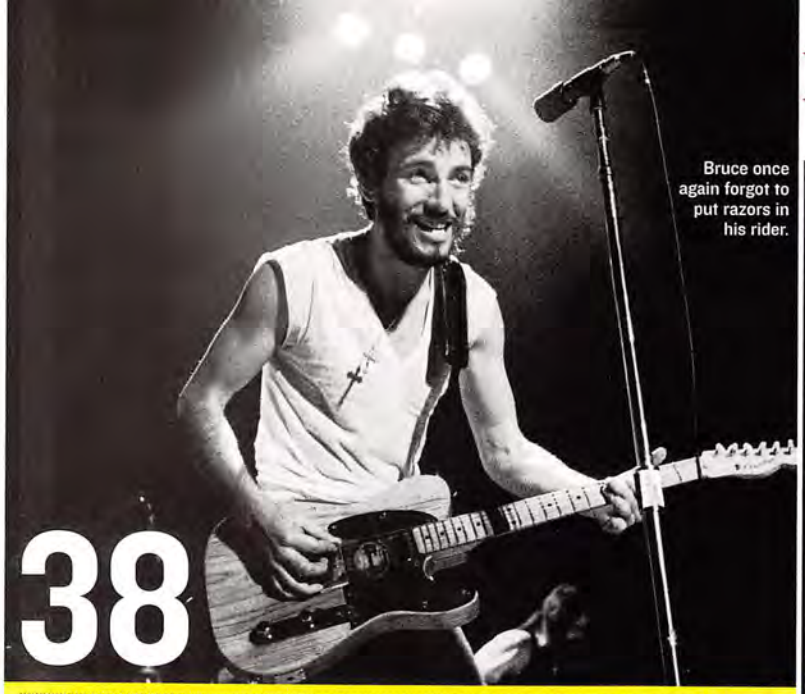


Bruce once again forgot to put razors in his rider.

38

May 9, 1974

SPRINGSTEEN DISCOVERED

Opening for Bonnie Raitt at a show in Cambridge, Massachusetts, 25-year-old Bruce Springsteen was bursting with new material and severely in need of some kind of big break. He got it when Jon Landau, reviewing the show for *The Real Paper*, wrote passionately (and ungrammatically): "I saw rock & roll's future and its name is Bruce Springsteen." His next album, *Born to Run*, got him onto the covers of both *Time* and *Newsweek*, and the Boss never had to open for anyone else again.

Unintended consequence: "THEY'RE NOT BOOING, THEY'RE YELLING *BRUUUUUCE*"

37

December 23, 2006

TOWER RECORDS CLOSES

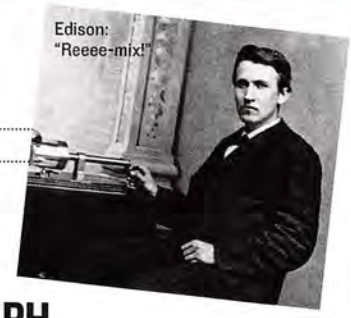
In 1991, Russ Solomon sat at the head of the Tower Records empire—boasting over 200 stores and $1 billion in annual sales. But by 2000, despite the advent of MP3s, Solomon had borrowed millions to build new stores in an Internet-ignoring gambit that led to the gradual ruin of America's most iconic record chain. Two days before Christmas 2006, the 89 remaining locations—littered with 50-cent Richard Marx "Best Of"s and the like—were shuttered. It was a symbolic funeral for the brick-and-mortar record store.

Unintended consequence: PEOPLE CAN NOW BUY SHOW TUNES WITHOUT FEAR OF PUBLIC HUMILIATION

36

December 7, 1877

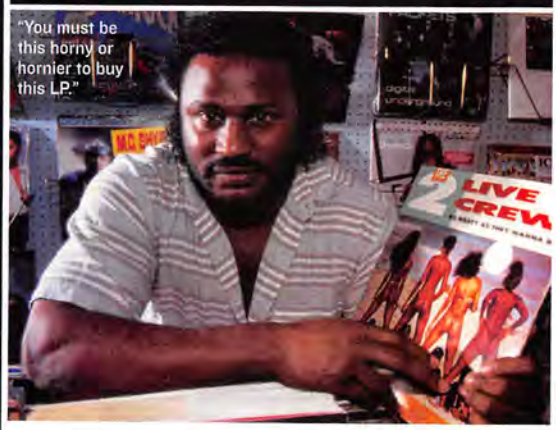
EDISON INVENTS THE PHONOGRAPH



Edison: "Reeee-mix!"

For a revolutionary invention, it looked a lot like a sausage grinder. On Christmas Eve, 1877, novice inventor Thomas Edison stretched tin foil around a metal cylinder, connected it to a hand crank and two needles, and created the first device for recording and playing back sound. It was to music what Gutenberg's printing press was to Jesus: Music had previously existed only in live performances, but now one could preserve, collect and distribute performances on the cheap. After some refinement, this coup led to the 45" single—and thus, pop music itself.

Unintended consequence: THE DOUBLE ALBUM



"You must be this horny or hornier to buy this LP."

35

April 20, 1987

2 LIVE CREW RELEASE THE FIRST "CLEAN" ALBUM

In 1986, after a Florida record-store clerk was charged with felony corruption of a minor for selling a copy of the amazingly profane *The 2 Live Crew Is What We Are* to a 14-year-old girl, the porn-rap crew decided to change tack. The next year, they dodged legal hot water—without hurting sales—by releasing an inoffensive alternate version of their next album, *Move Somethin'*; this business-savvy act of self-censorship soon allowed hip-hop to target children and go pop.

Unintended consequence: HAMMER TIME!

34

October 11, 1975

DEBUT OF *SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE*

SNL goes on to introduce mainstream America to such musical sensations as Elvis Costello, Talking Heads and "Dick in a Box."

33

March 5, 1971

"STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN" IS PLAYED LIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Unveiled in Belfast, Ireland, Zeppelin's sprawling 7:55 minute quiet-loud showpiece at once breaks the rules and sets the standard for what constitutes a rock anthem.

32

January 21, 1959

MARV JOHNSON RELEASES "COME TO ME"

The first single on Berry Gordy's little Detroit label Tamla—later known as Motown—is also its first hit, featuring the Funk Brothers, musicians whose sound would help make the label famous.

31

December 16, 1991

GRAND UPRIGHT MUSIC VS. WARNER BROS.

Rapper Biz Markie's defeat in this federal-copyright lawsuit had a chilling effect on then-unlimited hip-hop sampling. Goodbye, Bomb Squad; hello; Diddy.

30

October 5, 2001

POP IDOL DEBUTS ON BRITISH TV

One year before *American Idol* flipped the music and TV businesses on their heads, former Spice Girls manager Simon Fuller turned U.K. couch potatoes into A&R reps and nobodies into platinum-selling megastars.

29

August 18, 1969

HENDRIX PLAYS "THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER" AT WOODSTOCK

On a Monday morning, 400,000 hippies ditched work to watch him immortalize the festival as a countercultural landmark with his feedback-tortured transformation of the national anthem.

SPRINGSTEEN: ALLAN TANNENBAUM/POLARIS; EDISON: CORBIS; CHARLES FREEMAN; STEVE STARR/CORBIS; HENDRIX: HENRY DITZ/CORBIS; ROBERT PLANT: NEAL PRESTON/CORBIS; TOWER RECORDS: MARY ALTAFFER/AP PHOTO

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The Sex Pistols run through "Kumbaya" one more time.

28

November 26, 1976

SEX PISTOLS RELEASE "ANARCHY IN THE U.K."

The first punk band in Britain had been making headlines for close to a year; now it was time for them to make a record. Their first single, with its Situationist slogans and commands to destroy everything, terrified the stodgy older generation as much as it delighted the kids. Every British punk band of the next few years sprang to life in the wake of "Anarchy"—and, for a few months, the Pistols made it seem like punk was actually going to incite a political revolution.

Unintended consequence: $400 RIPPED T-SHIRTS AT FRED SEGAL

"Dude, it's like we're ... floating!"

27

August 28, 1964

THE BEATLES SMOKE POT

Bob Dylan had thought that the line "I can't hide" in "I Want to Hold Your Hand" was "I get high," but he was wrong. Hanging out with the Beatles at New York's Delmonico Hotel after their gig in Forest Hills, Dylan discovered that, despite the Fab Four's years playing in the fleshpots of Hamburg, they'd never tried anything stronger than the occasional pill. He smoked them up, and Paul McCartney began a lifelong love affair with pot, declaring, "I'm thinking for the first time—really thinking." After that, it was a straight line to Pepperland, Strawberry Fields and glass onions.

Unintended consequence: GOO GOO GJOOB

26

December 31, 1942

FRANK SINATRA PLAYS THE PARAMOUNT

Two full decades before Beatlemania, Ol' Blue Eyes sends bobby-soxers into shrieking hysterics, shutting down Times Square and forcing NYC cops to call in the riot squad.

25

September 18, 1979

THE SUGARHILL GANG RELEASE "RAPPER'S DELIGHT"

Hip-hop's first classic is also its first gold record, proving the genre's commercial viability—and paving the way for the Rappin' Granny.

24

May 15, 1954

THE FIRST FENDER STRATOCASTER IS SHIPPED

Among rock guitars, this is the O.G.—the one Hendrix used to play Woodstock, the one George Harrison used on *Rubber Soul* and the one that adorns Buddy Holly's grave

23

July 26, 1979

CONGRESS HEARS OF AN IMPENDING COCAINE-SMOKING EPIDEMIC

In a few years, urban America will be ravaged by "crack"—offering rappers nationwide their tragic muse.

22

December 8, 1980

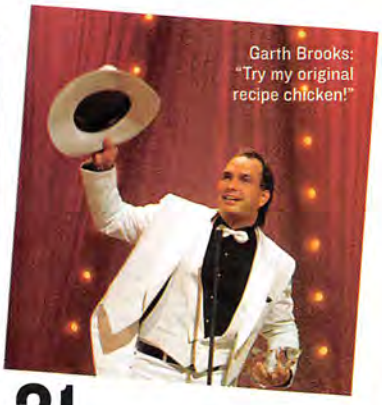
JOHN LENNON MURDERED

Never mind what the calendar says: This is the day the '60s died.

DAILY NEWS

JOHN LENNON SLAIN HERE

Ex-Beatle shot; nab suspect



Garth Brooks: "Try my original recipe chicken!"

21

May 25, 1991

SOUNDSCAN DEBUTS

In mid-1991, *Billboard* began using bar-code-based data from SoundScan to track CD sales, rather than relying on retailers' own often-faulty, sometimes-fraudulent tally. The week of the change, 15 more country albums appeared in the Top 200 than the previous week; four months later, Garth Brooks's *Ropin' the Wind* became the first country album to debut at No. 1. The more democratic chart system opened the industry's eyes to the widespread popularity of not only country but also hip-hop, which had been considered little more than a niche genre. In turn, country and urban artists were lavished with more attention and dollars, fueling the commercial ascent of both.

Unintended consequence: *THE LIFE OF CHRIS GAINES*

20

November 20, 1969

CLYDE STUBBLEFIELD PLAYS ON "FUNKY DRUMMER"

Beginning with Stubblefield's first single with James Brown, 1967's "Cold Sweat," the Godfather made room for his mind-bending drummer to solo whenever possible. Five minutes and 22 seconds into the final hit recorded by Brown's classic '60s band, at a session at King Records in Cincinnati, Stubblefield got his defining moment: an entire song built around his eight-bar break. When DJs a decade later discovered that they could loop two copies of it endlessly, Stubblefield's beat became arguably the most-sampled rhythm in hip-hop history, appearing on well over 150 records.

Unintended consequence: CRATE-DIGGING NERDS

SEX PISTOLS: RAY STEVENSON/RETNA; BROOKS: MARK HUMPHREY/AP PHOTO; STUBBLEFIELD: ROBIN LITTLE/REDFERNS/RETNA; BEATLES: KENT GAVIN/KEYSTONE/GETTY IMAGES.

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"When do I get to kiss the brides?"

19

September 14, 1984

MADONNA SINGS "LIKE A VIRGIN" AT THE *VMAS*

Before the *Sex* book, the burning crosses, the Britney-Christina three-way and African adoptions, Madge was just a 26-year-old girl in a wedding dress. Performing her first No. 1 hit at MTV's inaugural *Video Music Awards*, she danced on a 10-foot wedding cake in a veil, garters and her infamous "Boy Toy" belt, then descended to the stage for a bout of simulated masturbation. The ensuing media firestorm taught her valuable career-defining lessons: Sex sells, and controversy is fun. It also cemented her relationship with MTV and set the bar for countless outrageous *VMAs* moments to follow—not a few of which also involved Madonna.

Unintended consequence: DIANA ROSS BOOB-JIGGLES LIL' KIM

18

August 21, 1993

POLICE RAID NEVERLAND RANCH

Investigating allegations of child molestation, the LAPD search Michael Jackson's home in the Santa Ynez Valley, California, precipitating the superstar's slide from King of Pop to Wacko Jacko.

17

April 16, 1956

CHUCK BERRY NAILS DOWN HIS GUITAR SOUND

With the chord barrage that opens "Roll Over Beethoven," recorded at Chess Studios in Chicago, Berry perfects the sound of rock & roll lead guitar.

16

August 16, 1977

ELVIS PRESLEY DIES

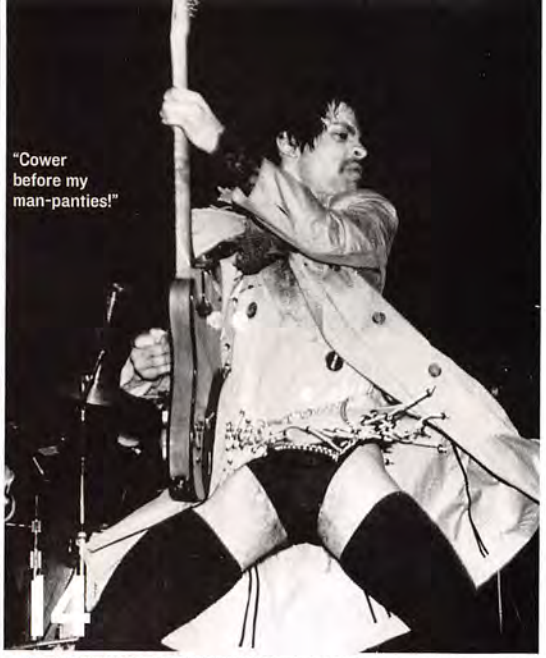
The King is found slumped in the bathroom of Graceland, launching a still-thriving multimillion dollar industry and a wave of implausible legends and posthumous "sightings."

15

July 25, 1965

BOB DYLAN GOES ELECTRIC AT NEWPORT

Backed up by members of Paul Butterfield's Blues Band, he makes it through only three electric songs before getting booed offstage by the folk-festival crowd; but that's enough to slam the door shut on the '60s folk revival. Acoustic guitars never get anyone laid again.



"Cower before my man-panties!"

October 8, 1980

PRINCE POSES IN BLACK UNDIES

Until this point, Prince had been just another upstart R&B singer. With the cover of his third album, *Dirty Mind*—a black-and-white shot of him giving the camera a come-hither look, wearing bikini briefs, a jacket, a bandanna and nothing else, and standing in front of an abstract design that looks a lot like bedsprings—he became something else. It looked (and the album sounded) like a new-wave record, and it delivered two clear messages. One was "I don't fit into any category anybody wants to put me in." The other was "I am coming to fuck you, right now." The combination worked well for Prince for the better part of 20 years.

Unintended consequence: CARMEN ELECTRA'S CAREER

"Remember folks, that's Dan's Denim Depot, exit 14A!"

13

March 25, 2002

JUSTIN AND BRITNEY SPLIT

When they split, Britney Spears was pop's reigning princess and Justin Timberlake was a singer for a boy band with little musical credibility and plummeting commercial prospects. Maybe Brit was weighing JT down? He's since released two monster solo albums, establishing him as a credible superstar on speed dial for rappers hunting for pop crossover. She's released one album of new material—a relative flop—and spent her time getting married (twice), having kids (twice), entering and ditching rehab, shaving her head and, for a while, carrying on a public campaign against wearing underwear.

Unintended consequence: "POPOZÃO!"

MADONNA: FRANK MICELOTTA/GETTY IMAGES; PRINCE: LAURA LEVINE; SPEARS AND TIMBERLAKE: JEFFREY MAYER/WIREIMAGE.

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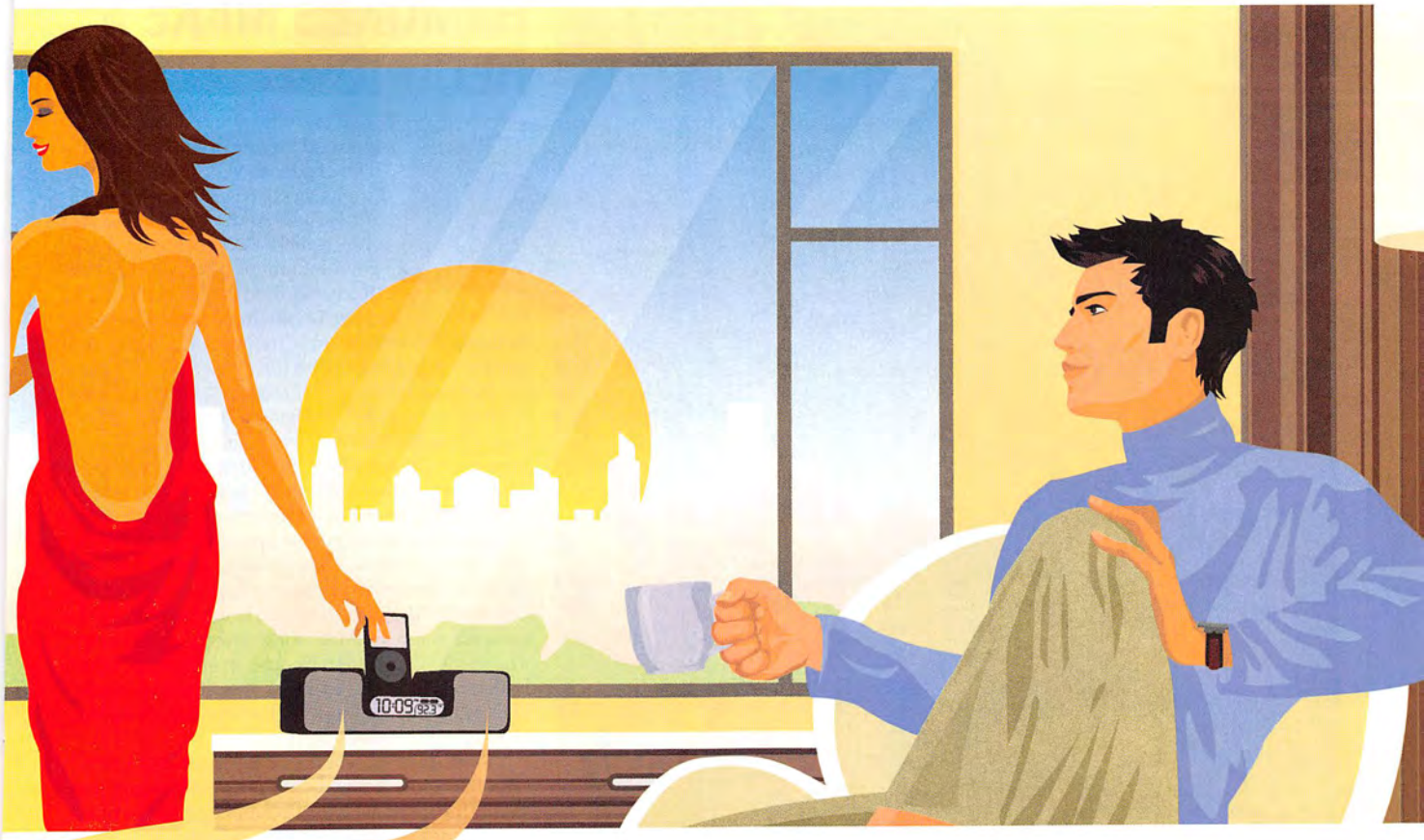

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"Union-mandated breaks rule!"

THREE-CHORD DITTIES ABOUT NAZIS AND THE ICE CAPADES

12

February 2, 1976

RAMONES MAKE A RECORD

IT IS A tale told by four idiots, full of sound and fury, recorded for $6,000. "It was real rushed," Tommy (Ramone) Erdelyi says of recording at Radio City Music Hall's studio. "Very low-budget and quick." Each song got one take: guitarist Johnny played in a gym the Rockettes used for dance rehearsal; bassist Dee Dee in the control room; and in another room on drums, Tommy—a guitarist who'd never sat behind a kit in his life.

Not that Erdelyi and the Queens, New York, band fronted by singer Jeffrey Hyman ("Joey Ramone") were idiots. But if anyone was in touch with their inner idiot it was the authors of "Blitzkrieg Bop," "Beat on the Brat" and the other mini-songs they put to vinyl.

Their shows at CBGB were 20-minute sets of two-minute songs played in what appeared to be a frantic attempt to get offstage as soon as possible. After signing to Sire Records, they lugged their gear to Radio City, where "the guard took one look at us and called up to make sure we were really booked," says Erdelyi. The result? Fourteen tracks and 29 minutes of nearly identical three-chord ditties about the CIA, Nazis and the Ice Capades sung with a faux-British accent. Genius—or moronic?

Most Americans assumed the latter. But many Londoners saw that while one or two such songs may signify incompetence, an album's worth shows true artistic intent—a manifesto of a stripped-down rock & roll atavism—and began forming bands: the Sex Pistols, the Clash and other shapers of rock's next 20 years. Recording budget: six grand. Launching punk: priceless. "The Ramones' first album is the blueprint for punk rock," the Clash's Joe Strummer once said. "So, any other group from the release of that album onward is really copping to the Ramones." *Chris Norris*

Sin City: Knight and Shakur in Vegas.

11

October 12, 1995

SUGE KNIGHT BAILS OUT TUPAC

Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G. started out friends, but their relationship began to crumble when Shakur was shot in late 1994. One day before, Shakur was found guilty of sexual assault and later imprisoned at NYC's Clinton Correctional Facility, where he heard rumors that Biggie had arranged the shooting. Death Row honcho Suge Knight, who had a longtime rivalry with Biggie's mentor P. Diddy, stoked Tupac's anti-B.I.G. rage and—in exchange for signing a contract with Death Row—posted 'Pac's $1.4 million bail. It would prove a Faustian bargain: With Shakur under Knight's wing, the Death Row/Bad Boy feud escalated, diss tracks led to assaults and by 1997, Pac and Biggie had been murdered—set up, some close to the case contend, by Knight himself.

Unintended consequence: 1,376 POSTHUMOUS TUPAC ALBUMS (AND COUNTING)

10

April 26, 1977

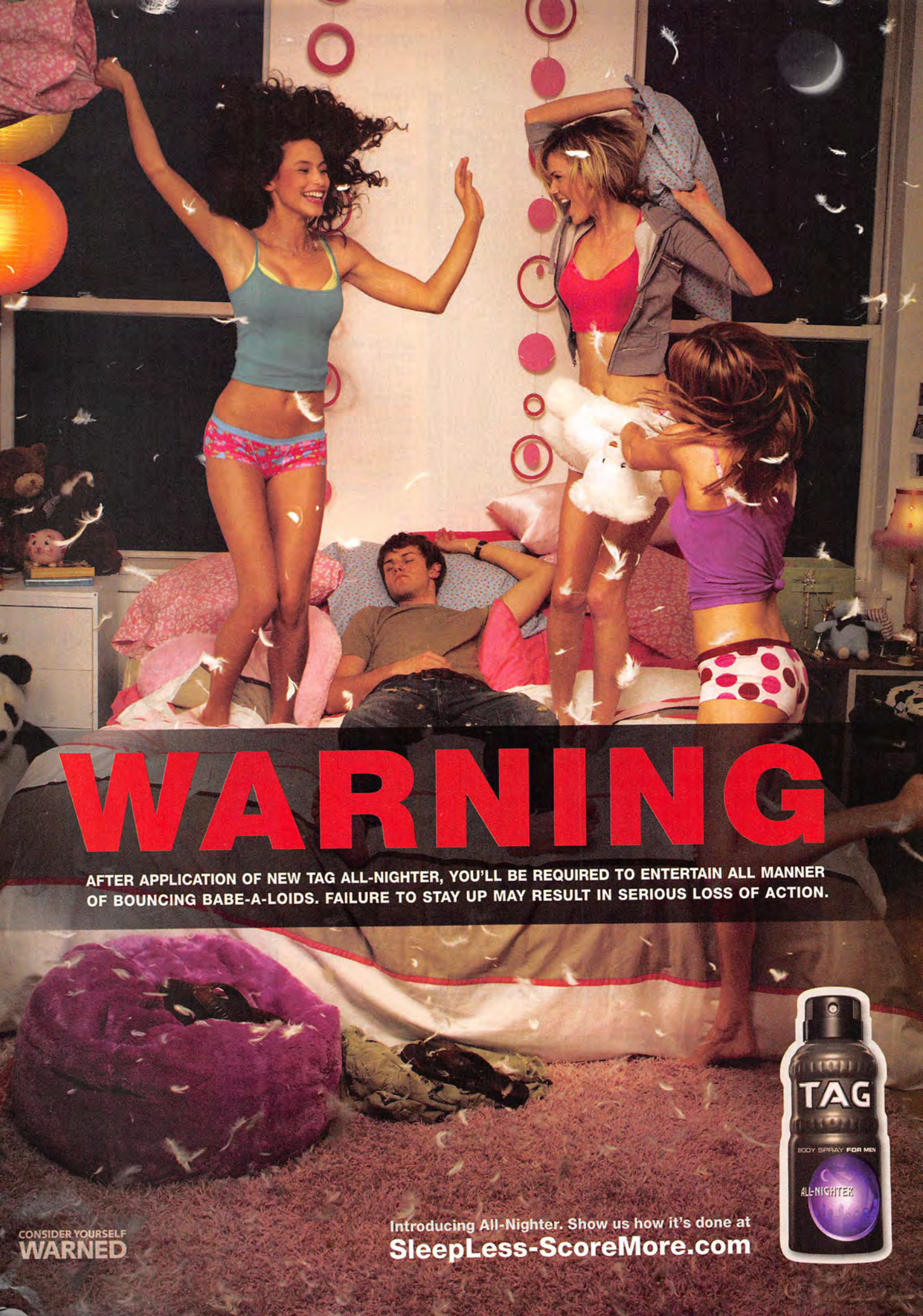
STUDIO 54 OPENS

It was the hottest spot of the disco era, a destination where glamorous people, groovy music and tons of white powder joined forces to change celebrity culture forever. Bianca Jagger, Donald Trump and 11-year-old Brooke Shields hustled across the converted TV studio's parquet floor on its opening night, while Bianca's then-husband Mick and Frank Sinatra were among the hundreds stranded outside. Studio 54 made the party's exclusivity more important than the party itself—though the party was still awesome. "It was the only club where you could have sex," said Prince Egon von Furstenberg.

Unintended consequence: PARIS HILTON

No doves were fed speed or forced into orgies in the making of this photo.

RAMONES: PIETER MAZEL/SUNSHINE/RETNA UK; STUDIO 54: BETTMAN/CORBIS; KNIGHT AND SHAKUR: LAUREN GREENFIELD/VII/AP; MUG SHOT: ZIMA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Keith Richards: The world's most dramatic "before" picture.

9

May 6, 1965

KEITH RICHARDS WRITES THE "(I CAN'T GET NO) SATISFACTION" RIFF

One night on the Rolling Stones' third U.S. tour, Richards awoke in his room at the Gulf Motel in Clearwater, Florida, with a riff in his head: He played it into a tape recorder beside the bed and went back to sleep. The next day, Keith explained to Mick Jagger that the words he'd thought up were "I can't get no satisfaction"; neither Keith nor Mick wanted the finished song released as a single, but they were outvoted—it became the Stones' first No. 1, and the ascent of the Greatest Rock & Roll Band in the World began.

Unintended consequence: *PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN, 1-3*

"The answer my friend, is blowing in the...zzz."

8

December 21, 1960

BOB DYLAN LEAVES MINNESOTA

He'd been talking for ages about hitting the road like his idol Woody Guthrie, and a few days before Christmas, 19-year-old folk-music buff Bobby Zimmerman finally made his move: He packed up his guitar and harmonica, walked out to Highway 61 and hitched a ride away from the Twin Cities. (As he later put it: "I had to get out of there and not come back.") Thirty-four days later, "Bob Dylan," as he was now calling himself, arrived in New York and played his first gig there, an open mike at Cafe Wha?, beginning his career as the king of the New York folkies.

Unintended consequence: JEWS GET COOL

7

March 2, 1983

MTV AIRS "BILLIE JEAN" VIDEO

Formerly all but off-limits to black artists, the fledgling music video channel is finally strong-armed into featuring Michael Jackson. Everyone gets richer and cooler.

6

October 25, 1997

DR. DRE HEARS EMINEM FREESTYLING ON KPWR'S "WAKE UP SHOW" IN L.A.

Afterward, Dre tracks down Marshall Mathers, signs him, and "white hip-hop" goes from low-melanin punch line to a multimillion-dollar one-man art form.

5

August 1, 1981

MTV DEBUTS

In a banner day for lip-synching, outrageous fashion and rebellious teens, music hops mediums, making walking, talking 2-D video stars accessible 24 hours a day.

4

March 30, 1994

KURT COBAIN BUYS A REMINGTON M-11 20-GAUGE SHOTGUN AND A BOX OF AMMUNITION

Six days later, grunge and its reluctant poster boy are dead.

Shawn Fanning hides out from music-biz assassins.

3

June 1, 1999

NAPSTER RELEASED

Early in 1999, after his roommate at Northeastern University complained about the unreliability of MP3 download sites, Shawn Fanning became obsessed with devising software to make music file sharing easier. Fanning dropped out of college and, after three months in front of a laptop in his uncle's office, completed coding "Napster," sent it to 30 chat-room friends—and asked them to keep it to themselves. By February 2001, 26.4 million people were using it to trade songs. Five months later, an RIAA suit shut them down—but by then, people were used to getting music for free; CD sales began their downward spiral.

Unintended consequence: LARS ULRICH HAS ONE LESS BASQUIAT IN HIS COLLECTION

Kool DJ Herc (right) and pal model the "rec-room chic" look.

2

August 11, 1973

KOOL DJ HERC INVENTS HIP-HOP

Aiming to use his budding local rep as a DJ to raise money for back-to-school clothes, the 18-year-old born in Kingston, Jamaica, crammed the rec room of a Bronx apartment complex with paying customers. He earned $500, but Herc's real achievement was in noticing that people most enjoyed songs' instrumental breakdowns: He started looping one break endlessly into itself, while rapping friends' nicknames into a mic. Hip-hop as we know it would flow from that moment: "After that," Herc tells *Blender*, "You couldn't put a cap on it. It was like *The Beverly Hillbillies*: black gold. And it's still gushing."

Unintended consequence: SKYROCKETING SALES OF CRISTAL, VERSACE AND ESCALADES

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MAIN STAGE

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REVOLUTION STAGE

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Jul 25	Auburn, WA	White River Amphitheatre
Jul 27	Marysville, CA	Sleep Train Amphitheatre
Jul 28	San Bernardino, CA	Hyundai Pavilion
Jul 29	Mountain View, CA	Shoreline Amphitheatre at Mountain View
Jul 31	Chula Vista, CA	Coors Amphitheatre
Aug 01	Phoenix, AZ	Cricket Pavilion
Aug 03	Selma, TX	Verizon Wireless Amphitheater
Aug 04	Dallas, TX	Smirnoff Music Centre
Aug 05	Woodlands, TX	The Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion
Aug 07	Atlanta, GA	HiFi Buys Amphitheatre
Aug 08	Charlotte, NC	Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre Charlotte
Aug 10	West Palm Beach, FL	Sound Advice Amphitheatre
Aug 11	Tampa, FL	Ford Amphitheatre
Aug 13	Raleigh, NC	Walnut Creek Amphitheatre
Aug 14	Virginia Beach, VA	Verizon Wireless Virginia Beach Amphitheater
Aug 15	Wantagh, NY	Nikon at Jones Beach Theater
Aug 17	Cuyahoga Falls, OH	Blossom Music Center
Aug 18	Darien Center, NY	Darien Lake Performing Arts Center
Aug 19	Bristow, VA	Nissan Pavilion
Aug 21	Toronto, ON	Molson Amphitheatre
Aug 22	Clarkston, MI	DTE Energy Music Theatre
Aug 24	Mansfield, MA	Tweeter Center for the Performing Arts
Aug 25	Camden, NJ	Tweeter Center at the Waterfront
Aug 26	Hartford, CT	New England Dodge Music Center
Aug 28	Syracuse, NY	NY State Fair
Aug 29	Holmdel, NJ	PNC Bank Arts Center
Aug 31	Noblesville, IN	Verizon Wireless Music Center
Sep 01	Tinley Park, IL	First Midwest Bank Amphitheatre
Sep 03	Englewood, CO	Coors Amphitheatre

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The Beatles on *Ed Sullivan*

BY THE TIME the Beatles debuted on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, America had *heard* them: Six of their songs were on the radio, two albums were running up the charts and "I Want to Hold Your Hand" was midway through its two-month residence at No. 1. But *seeing* the Beatles was different. Their hair looked funny; their skinny legs ended in pointed boots; they jittered with excitement and they wore the most extraordinary expressions—amused and amazed, grinning and scanning the furthest reaches of the scream-packed balcony, as if trying to fathom the hysteria they were causing. Playing "All My Loving," "She Loves You" and even the mildly drippy "'Til There Was You," the Beatles revolutionized music that night, and everyone watching felt either a promise or a threat. The songs were full and melodic like pop, yet put across by this self-contained, electric unit—goodbye, gloopy orchestras. They were tight, brothers in arms, not phony or ingratiating—making a gorgeous, joyous racket that seemed to spill from their suits, their hair, their fingertips. It was a moment of celebrity uncorrupted, where rock & roll began its modern life as a cultural force, and the Beatles were as jazzed as everyone else that they were the vehicle of delivery.

Seventy-three million people watched—still one of the largest TV audiences ever—including the entire next generation of rock stars, from Billy Joel to Gene Simmons of Kiss. Bruce Springsteen, who'd picked up a guitar after seeing Elvis on *Ed Sullivan* in '56, went out and bought an amp. "Most of us guys were screaming on the inside," says Steve Van Zandt, E Street Band guitarist. "It was absolutely life-changing. There was no Plan B. There was no choice. These guys dropped in from another planet, and invited you to this new world." *Karen Schoemer*

"And *this* is the string that makes jailbait hyperventilate!"

SEVENTY-THREE MILLION PEOPLE WATCHED A MOMENT OF CELEBRITY UNCORRUPTED.

BEATLES: BETTMANN/CORBIS; INSET: AP PHOTO.

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Jason McCarthy, Construction Job Site Supervisor and Sergeant in the U.S. Army Reserve.

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RIHANNA AND JESSICA WANT HIS BEATS. BRITNEY JUST PLAIN WANTED HIM. BUT, TO POP PRODUCER *DU JOUR* **J.R. ROTEM**, THE GOOD LIFE COMES AT A PRICE ...

PIMPIN' AIN'T EASY

By
VICTORIA DE SILVERIO
Photographs by
ROBYN TWOMEY

STYLING: ALEXANDER GUTIERREZ/WORKGROUP; GROOMING: YUJI KOJIMA FOR REDKEN FOR THE REX AGENCY; MODEL: AFIFI ALAOUIE; ROBE: KASHWEAR.

"Now *this* is how you do a push-up!"

"I fucked Britney wheelbarrow style." Jonathan "J.R." Rotem is holding court at his Beluga Heights studio in West Hollywood, California. The music producer is wearing enormous silver Elvis sunglasses and a diamond-encrusted keyboard around his neck; his hair glistens like a bird in an oil spill. To the audience clustered around his couch—his manager Zach Katz, two cameramen filming a reality-show pilot, Denaun Porter of hip-hop group D12—Rotem offers a series of impromptu non sequiturs: "I have a fear of germs"; "I don't invest in real estate, I invest in jewelry"; "I'm a Leo, a lion"; "I've seen *Zoolander* 100 times"; and, finally, "I fucked Britney wheelbarrow style. Just kidding." He waits a beat. "It was tractor style."

You may recall Rotem's name and/or hair from the gossip blogs. Back in December, five weeks after Spears sent Kevin Federline packing from Malibu to the Valley, sandwiched somewhere in the midst of her cataclysmic mental mudslide—between paparazzi shots of her bald beaver and her nude noggin—grainy footage appeared of the postpartum pop star climbing onto Rotem's lap, cigarette in hand, leaning in for a kiss. They had been working together on her next record and capped the night with the Cameron Diaz chick flick *The Holiday*—and some curbside canoodling.

Back at Beluga Heights, Rotem's old friend Porter presses him for salacious details about that night. "*How* did you do that?" the rapper asks, slapping his thigh in disbelief. "I heard she's on the wild side. Is that true?" The cameramen exchange excited glances. Whether out of respect for Spears or concern for his career, Rotem clams up. His right foot twitches; his knuckles whiten on the arm of the leather couch. An awkward silence creeps in. "We were working in the studio together," Rotem replies flatly, trying to bring the conversation to a halt. He ventures something about a sampling machine. But Porter just ignores him: "You are a hound dog!" he shouts. "I remember when he get no pussy. Now he getting all kind of pussy. I was watching E! and I saw this nigga walk in, and I was like—*That's J.R.*!"

J.R. ROTEM IS a multiplatinum music producer. It says so on his MySpace page, and it's true. It also says that he's from Beverly Hills, which is not exactly true. He's an Israeli born in South Africa, raised first in Toronto and then in an affluent Bay Area suburb. He lives in an apartment building in the neighborhood known as Wilshire Corridor—but Beverly Hills, the leafy enclave of the rich and famous, isn't far away. His studio and record label are both named Beluga Heights, a fictitious place that conjures up champagne wishes and caviar dreams. His look—which recalls that of Scott Storch, the other Jewish hip-hop production *macher*—belies his accomplished background as a classical and jazz pianist.

"People who just see me in front of the paparazzi acting like a jackass have no clue who I am."

"He's a musical genius and one of the biggest music producers in Hollywood," says *Heroes* cutie Hayden Panettiere, whose debut CD, coming in August, will feature a handful of Rotem-produced tracks. "He's very fun, very smart and a genuine, nice guy. Not a horrible idiot."

"He is the best up-and-coming producer in the music industry," says The Game, who, when faced with making his second record, *Doctor's Advocate*, without his trusted father figure Dr. Dre, sought Rotem's services. "I call him the white Dr. Dre because when it seemed like I couldn't finish the record unless I had Dre beats, J.R. stepped up to the plate and gave me the dopest tracks."

After spending five years quietly earning credibility in the hip-hop arena by making beats for, among others, The Game, 50 Cent, Fabolous, Snoop Dogg, G-Unit, Destiny's Child, Rick Ross, Lil' Kim and Dr. Dre, the 31-year-old Rotem is this moment's go-to guy for hit-hungry pop stars. His career turning point was "S.O.S.," the "Tainted Love"-sampling track he'd been trying to sell for three years, before it was eventually recorded by Rihanna in 2006—and became a worldwide hit that reached the top of six *Billboard* charts.

Today, urban music and Top 40 pop are as inseparable as ever, and Rotem's beats strike a precise, gaudy compromise between the two. He offers R&B singers like Rihanna a chance to cross over to mainstream audiences, invoking and updating '80s dance-floor jams for the Pro Tools age; and he offers pop blondes like Ashley Tisdale and Paris Hilton sinewy, pulsating tracks steeped in shiny synthesizer sounds and spiked with hip-hop swagger. There's something Bruckheimerian about his production: It's big, busy and—in a *Where have I heard this before?* sense—generic.

His date book shows that Britney isn't the only one hoping for a Rotem-produced smash: The Veronicas and Christina Milian are coming by for sessions. A meeting with Jessica Simpson has been postponed (according to Rotem, his lothario reputation has made new beau John Mayer a bit nervous). No matter, he has some finishing touches to put on tracks for Sean Kingston, the 17-year-old Jamaican rapper who is Rotem's first signing to Beluga Heights; he needs to tighten up a track for J. Lo; and Busta Rhymes has been asking to stop by. He describes the TV pilot he's filming as a brand-building tool. "People all know the women, the jewelry, the cars, all of which I have," he tells the cameras at one point.

VANILLA ICE: ANTHONY CUTAYAR/LFI; BEASTIE BOYS: JOSH CHEUSE/RETNA

Is there a constitutional ban against burning Vanilla Ice?

Play That Funky Music, White Boy!

J.R. Rotem isn't the only hip-hop honky to leave his (pale) mark on the genre ...

1977
SAL ABBATIELLO
To get his new Bronx nightspot Disco Fever off the ground, this hip-hop early adopter books up-and-coming DJ Grandmaster Flash, officially bringing hip-hop in from the schoolyards.

1984
RICK RUBIN
Punk fan Rubin cofounds Def Jam in his NYU dorm. He later helps create rap rock by pairing Aerosmith and Run-D.M.C. for "Walk This Way."

1987
BEASTIE BOYS
NYC brats tour the world in support of their debut, *Licensed to Ill*, with an inflatable penis onstage. Rap's first worthwhile white MCs.

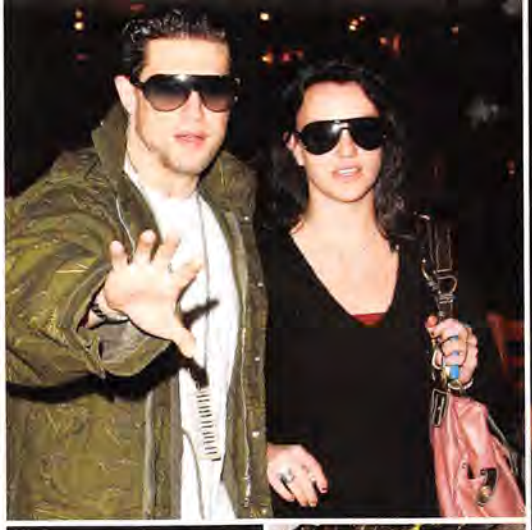
1987
JERRY HELLER
This former agent cofounds Ruthless Records with Eazy-E. Goes on to manage—and acrimoniously split from—gangsta progenitors N.W.A.

"But I want to show the blood, sweat and the tears, the stress and the rejection. I want people to know the different sides to me. I've always been a dick, but I've had to be nice to get where I am; now I want to be me. The real me."

In the pursuit of the "real" J.R. Rotem, it's easy to get tripped up in the look—which he calls "half Guido, half wigger"—and the painfully unfunny bada-bing one-liners. Driving home from the studio one night in his Maserati Quattroporte, he explains that this is all merely a persona, one he created in an attempt to assimilate into the hip-hop demimonde. He compares himself to a method actor or a Donnie Brasco—an undercover cop who goes native. "When I first got in, I was like, *I'll let my music do the talking*. But it became apparent that it's important how I sell myself. My family brought me up to think that bragging was classless and repugnant. But if you don't talk big, you don't win."

It's this persona that has made some people initially wonder who, exactly, this clown thinks he is. That was the reaction of newcomer Lucy Walsh (daughter of Eagles guitarist Joe Walsh) when her Island Records A&R rep Rob Stevenson introduced her to Rotem. "When she first met him, she was like, '*Who* are you having me work with?'" remembers Stevenson. "But after 20 minutes of explaining to him what we wanted, he started writing a song that separates her from the pack. In this business you get flash, but often nothing underneath. J.R. has substance."

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, to Israeli parents, Rotem moved to Toronto at the age of 2, where he was recognized as having a special talent for playing the piano. Before he turned 14, the Rotems moved once more, this time to Moraga, California, outside San Francisco. His precocious dedication to studying the master composers attracted prestigious teachers who encouraged him to perform in classical-piano recitals and competitions, some of which he won.



Made in the shades (clockwise from top left): Rotem with Britney Spears; new charge Hayden Panettiere; Christina Milian; Soft Cell fan Rihanna.

In 1993, he moved to Boston to attend the Berklee College of Music. That same year, Rotem took his first jazz-piano lesson. Enthusiastically sloughing off the rigidity of classical music, Rotem fell in love with the free-form improv of both the music and the jazzbo lifestyle and spent 12 hours a day practicing and getting high. "I didn't ever want to be a rock star—I wanted to be a jazz star," he says. "I thought it would be cool to die young and on drugs, like Coltrane and Davis. People wouldn't believe how much coke and heroin I would do when I played." Four years ago, Rotem went cold turkey and now shuns even caffeinated drinks.

Nineteen ninety-three was also the year Snoop Dogg released his debut CD, *Doggystyle*, produced by Dr. Dre. "When Snoop came out, I thought he was the coolest guy on the planet," Rotem says. "I started to dress like him, and I learned all his songs on piano." After graduating from Berklee, Rotem moved back to Moraga and started making beats, putting them on CDs and handing them out to anyone who would take them. Eventually, someone who knew someone gave one to D'Wayne Wiggins of the R&B group Tony, Toni, Toné, who wanted it for an En Vogue record. Luckily for Rotem, it eventually landed on Destiny's Child's 2001 *Survivor*, as "Fancy." *Survivor* went on to sell 8.7 million copies, turning his humble initial fee of $2,500 into a windfall.

Within a year, Rotem was living in L.A. After meeting up with Zach Katz, who had become well-known in hip-hop circles for managing Rakim, among others, Rotem got an audition to play piano for Dr. Dre, who ended up buying a couple of his beats. Since then, Rotem has produced more than 100 tracks, generally at $40,000 to $50,000 a pop; he's bought the Maserati—a car he describes as a "panty soaker"; >>

1989
3RD BASS
Queens Jew MC Serch and pal Pete Nice release the not-at-all embarrassing *The Cactus Album* (despite embarrassing hair).

1994
LIMP BIZKIT
Four friends in Jacksonville, Florida, bond over a love of Rakim and Suicidal Tendencies, and form a band. The rest is red-capped, girl-hating history.

1997
EMINEM
Dr. Dre hears an unknown MC freestyling on the radio in L.A. and signs the biggest and best white rapper ever.

1999
VANILLA ICE
Rob Van Winkle appears on MTV to destroy the network's "Ice Ice Baby" videotape. Still can't destroy his "walking punch line" status.

2006
SCOTT STORCH
The biggest white beatsmith of the 'aughts shows a reporter his new yacht—named Storchavelli.

2007
SHAMROCK
The Atlanta-born, Irish-repping MC wins VH1's *The (White) Rapper Show*. Surprisingly, an illustrious career has yet to follow (but he does have 2 million MySpace plays!).

RETNA; FRED DURST: KEVIN MAZUR; EMINEM: CHIVERS DIAMPIETRO; STORCH: [illegible]

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"Whoops, this is not the toilet!"

and he's succeeded in being expelled from Kevin Federline's group of MySpace friends.

On a Saturday afternoon, Rotem, his writing partner Evan Bogart—son of Casablanca Records founder Neil Bogart—and Katz are waiting at Beluga HQ for Jessi Malay. A 20-year-old R&B singer, she is due at the studio to recut some vocals. While they wait, Rotem and the gang are yucking it up; as it goes, "vegetarian" becomes "*vag*itarian," "egotistical" is pronounced "ego*test*ical" and "flow chart" is repeated back, front-loaded with "menstrual." When Malay arrives, Rotem's reality-show pilot gets a dose of sex appeal. She's half Filipino, half Jewish, sexy but not intimidating, pretty but also cute. She has salon hair, tight jeans and high heels, and her breasts, side-peeking from her hoodie, zipped down low, splay suspiciously. After small talk about having seen each other at the club, he tells her to "One, get in the booth and, two—take your pants off and sing." Malay rolls her eyes and obediently enters the vocal booth. As she warbles her chorus, Rotem implores her to reach deeper, offering comments into a two-way speaker on the mixing desk: "I'm picturing you with a horse," he says. "Fuck the horse." And later, "Tap into that Filipino barrio. Pretend you have mango juice dripping off you; like you are barefoot, pregnant and you are cooking. Squirt all over the track."

"I CALL J.R. THE WHITE DR. DRE."
THE GAME

On the couch, Evan Bogart is Googling. When he comes across a paparazzi photo of Rotem taken on a night out with Britney, he tilts his laptop so the producer can see it. "I like my eyes," Rotem says, unintentionally sounding like Derek Zoolander, and rubs some Purell Instant Hand Sanitizer into his palms. A blog has another photo of Rotem with captions that read, IT'S DARK OUT, JACKASS and PUT MORE OIL IN YOUR HAIR, OPEC. Bogart and Rotem laugh hysterically, each taking turns repeating the lines. In the booth, Malay has finished her chorus; in the background her voice squeaks through the speaker: "Was that OK?"

The distracted work-play process goes on for another five hours—a photo of a kitten is sent to the huge computer screen above the mixing board, tracks from Katharine McPhee's debut are analyzed, dinner is ordered, Katz auditions a mariachi band next door—until finally, at 10 P.M., Rotem's mood suddenly sours. He has decided that the vibe in the room is negative, that Bogart and Malay are mad at him, that the magazines scattered across the floor of the darkened studio are too distracting. He rubs more Purell on his hands and identifies another vibe-killing annoyance: the tangle of cords on the floor. Compulsively tidying them up, Rotem exhales deeply, sits down at the piano and pounds out an effortless version of the somber jazz standard "Autumn Leaves." Ten minutes later, he lingers on the last note and calmly announces, "OK, now we can focus. Let's get back to work."

The following night, at a music-biz party at the Roosevelt Hotel—where Paris Hilton is seen walking in circles yelling into her phone—Rotem seeks out a quiet place on the steps outside for conversation. Away from the reality-TV crew and the teasing friends, he finally removes his sunglasses. He discusses actresses as singers ("Can't say it's a good thing, but now you can make people sing in tune; you can't fight technology"), sampling ("I've had to adjust my ego to use samples. It's humbling ... I have to share credit and money") and being a white boy in hip-hop ("With jazz, I've always been in a multiracial environment, and I've dated interracially"). He talks about promiscuity ("I don't have one-night stands") and, finally, what really happened with Britney Spears.

"Britney and I were in a relationship," he says quietly. "We were dating for about two weeks but decided for both our careers that it wouldn't be cool to have a romantic relationship. She was really emotional and distressed at the time."

Rotem says he doesn't regret what happened, or his overnight notoriety; he knows it's good for business. But whatever anyone thinks of him, he insists he always tries to do the right thing. "There are definitely times when I'm an arrogant, vain asshole. But the bigger part is sensitive, goodhearted. People who just see me in front of the paparazzi acting like a jackass have no clue who I am." And with that, Rotem texts Paris to see where she's gone off to. [BLENDER]

TUXEDO AND SHIRT: DOLCE & GABBANA; JEANS: ROCK & REPUBLIC; SHOES: NIKE; BELT: LOUIS VUITTON. THE GAME: PETER KRAMER/GETTY.

GUEST LIST

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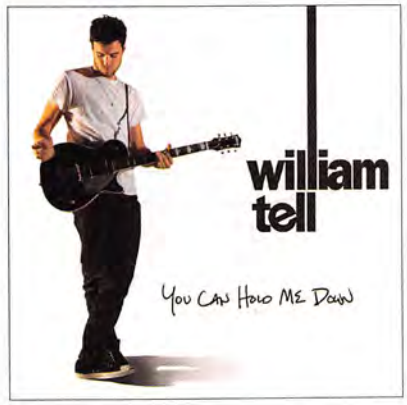

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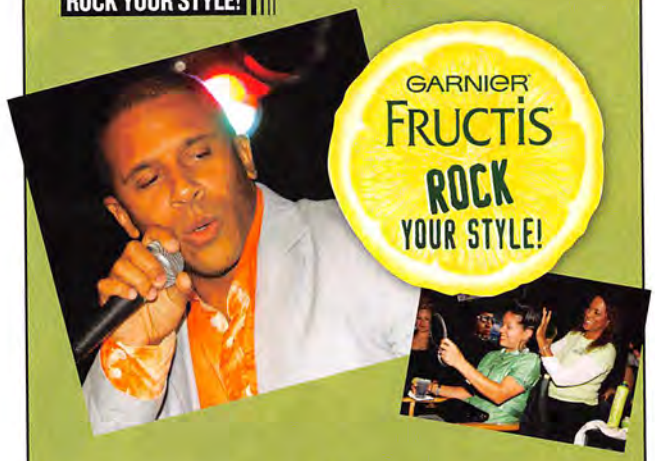

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Nokia 5300 XpressMusic

KELLY CLARKSON
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✪✪✪✪

R. KELLY
R&B's fearless freak unleashes the Sexasaurus on an album full of dirty talk.
✪✪✪½

BEASTIE BOYS
An instrumental disc that amounts to slightly hip elevator music. Next floor: boredom!
✪✪½

THE GUIDE

THEY MAKE 'EM. WE REVIEW 'EM

GUITARS GONE WILD!

WHITE LIGHTNING

After fooling around with some detours, Jack White unholsters his guitar and fires into the sky

THE WHITE STRIPES

ICKY THUMP ✪✪✪✪½

THIRD MAN/WARNER BROS.

"WE JUST KEEP going, right, Meg?" Jack White crows near the end of "Rag and Bone," a snarling blues-rock stomp. "Old-folks house ... catacombs ... Lookin' for techniques, turntables to gramophones ... /They're just things that you don't want/I can use 'em/Meg can use 'em/We can do something with 'em/We'll make *something* out of 'em."

For a decade now, Jack White has been such a dedicated self-mythologizer—spinning tall tales about his childhood, applying mystique to his music and dress code with refusenik rhetoric and talk of European art movements—that it's hard to believe anything he says about his band, especially when it's delivered carnival-barker style in a jive drawl. But this jokey aside holds the key to the White Stripes' project.

Jack and Meg White are great scavengers, rummagers in the attic of popular song, making uncanny collages from castoffs and heirlooms: Appalachian folk-ballad fatalism, Delta crossroads guitar licks, Robert Plant's libidinous yowl, yellowing Brill Building sheet music, the scuzz-caked 45s of a hundred forgotten garage-rock bands and more vintage tube amps than Lenny Kravitz could fit in his beach house.

And now, the bagpipes. This often-mocked instrument bedecks two songs on *Icky Thump*—first wheezing alongside acoustic guitar in "Prickly Thorn, but Sweetly Worn," a traditionalist Scottish reel Jack matches with ye-olde- >>

Jack White: "Psst! My underwear is actually fuschia!"

CLARKSON: CHAPMAN BAEHLER; BEASTIE BOYS: VANYA EDWARDS; WHITE STRIPES: AUTUMN DE WILDE.

style lyrics ("And the thistle is a prickly flower/Aye, but how it is sweetly worn"). Then comes the sequel, "St. Andrew (This Battle Is in the Air)," which starts out like another slice of Highlands folk before exploding into a psychedelic mini-epic, with bagpipe skrills and screeching guitar jousting above Meg's spoken vocal. It's a typically cheeky and perverse stunt, adding another layer to the White Stripes myth of origins (the album's press release alludes to the Stripes' "Scottish ancestry") and playfully excavating ancient music while also dabbling in a little misty-mountain Zeppelinalia.

Indeed, after laying low on the exotic, marimba-and-piano-spiced *Get Behind Me Satan*, Jack White, guitar hero, is back in full, outrageously indulgent glory. At times, *Icky Thump* feels like an essay on the capabilities of the electric guitar's upper register: Listen to the pealing notes he plays toward the end of the blues vamp "300 M.P.H. Torrential Outpour Blues" or the almost painfully shrieky climactic solo in "You Don't Know What Love Is (You Just Do as You're Told)." The result is the headbangingest White Stripes album yet, anchored by Meg's usual messy bashing, with devilry erupting when least expected. The mariachi-flavored cover of Patti Page's late-'50s hit "Conquest" builds to a magnificent call-and-response featuring trumpet and White's most showily fleet-fingered soloing to date—high-desert Joe Satriani.

THE RESULT IS THE HEADBANGINGEST WHITE STRIPES YET.

If the blues progressions put *Icky Thump* in Jack's musical sweet spot, Jack the spiritual traveler is, as ever, adrift—hounded by cruel fate, pondering death and desolation, chasing redemption and hot women, including some half his age. The teenage love object in the blues-funk corker "A Martyr for My Love for You" may be the ultimate in his pantheon of spectral sirens, an unattainable goddess who plunges him into a meditation on mortality and statutory-rape laws. But Jack also turns his gaze from earthly matters, trying on the fiery rhetoric of a Pentecostal preacher: "If you're testing God/Lying to His face/You're gonna catch hell."

It's the sound of a band not stretching out so much as digging in: burrowing deeper into loamy soil they know well. And why not? Nostalgia may be all that's left for rockers in 2007—it's Timbaland's world, after all. And where thousands of lesser bands offer warmed-over versions of old glories, Jack and Meg, like Bob Dylan, are trickster traditionalists. They profess to worship roots music but treat it as a plaything, a mystery to be plumbed and parodied, the source of sustenance and fodder for an elaborate conceptual-art stunt that makes the past sound like the future. "We wanna get it, Granny/While it's hot/You think it's trash, Granny/But it's not," Jack sings. There are plenty of old-folks homes and catacombs left to explore, and rags and bones to be collected. They'll make something out of 'em.

JODY ROSEN

DOWNLOAD: "Icky Thump," "Conquest"

Jack and Meg bead the crap out of each other.

< THE SCORE >	
✪✪✪✪✪	CLASSIC
✪✪✪✪	GREAT
✪✪✪	GOOD
✪✪	MEDIOCRE
✪	FOUL

AGAINST ME!

NEW WAVE ✪✪✪✪

SIRE

Political punk, from the swamps of Fla.

Against Me! aren't a punk band in the contemporary sense. You won't find its members shilling for car companies, dating celebutantes or running through their videos naked. They're not emo. They do not pout. Rather, the Florida foursome is a true throwback: On Against Me!'s major-label debut, they pound out 10 working-class tunes that rock like Green Day and rail like the Clash. Using his bottomless growl like a cudgel, frontman Tom Gabel hammers away on mall-unfriendly topics like the war in Iraq, the "digital marketplace" and runaway junkies. Happily, superproducer Butch Vig is around to help transform Gabel's strident leftism and occasionally clumsy choruses (e.g., "Protest Songs! In response to military aggression!") into swing-state-ready stadium rock.

ANDY GREENWALD

DOWNLOAD: "Thrash Unreal," "White People for Peace," "New Wave"

ART BRUT

IT'S A BIT COMPLICATED ✪✪✪½

DOWNTOWN

Unjaded Brit still shouts with glee when he sees a girl naked

Eddie Argos is what the French sometimes call a *naïf* and Americans sometimes call a *retard*. He's 27 but remains fixated on adolescence, a time when each day is a tourism adventure and every feeling is the size of a Times Square billboard. On Art Brut's spectacular first album, Argos spoke-sang about grand topics that have long engaged great minds: impotence, post-Impressionist art, first love and how awesome it would be to hang out with Axl Rose. Argos still cherishes the state of being excited, and although his band of three-chord amateurs brings more spikiness to the guitars and more motion to the beats, this follow-up just isn't as lovable. Argos sprays cafe wit as he details make-out sessions and chilly breakups, but these topics are too pedestrian for him. He rises to greater challenges, like proving it's possible to shout a great chorus hook in broken German.

ROB TANNENBAUM

DOWNLOAD: "Direct Hit," "Sound of Summer"

Big & Rich: Total ballbusters

BEASTIE BOYS

THE MIX-UP ✪✪½

CAPITOL

The completion of a virtual trilogy honoring this NYC trio's central sources

Beastie Boys spent the first half of their career mixing up a wild-style B-boy bouillabaisse of hip-hop, punk and greasy funk. They've spent most of the second half demonstrating that it's far less fun when they approach those styles separately and earnestly. *The Mix-Up* is the inevitable, all-instrumental, soul-jazz Beastie project, following in the tradition of the 1995 hardcore EP *Aglio e Olio* and the disappointing old-school beats 'n' rhymes of *To the 5 Boroughs*, in 2004. Though the album's modesty is appealing (only one song clocks in at longer than four minutes), it's the sound of a group treading water. The mid-tempo, interchangeable grooves might occasionally get you nodding your head, but do you think even Mike D knows the difference between "The Rat Cage" and "The Kangaroo Rat"? Background music for alphabetizing your vinyl collection.

ALAN LIGHT

DOWNLOAD: "Electric Worm"

BIG & RICH

BETWEEN RAISING HELL AND AMAZING GRACE ✪✪✪✪

WARNER BROS. NASHVILLE

Gretchen Wilson's Nashville-rebel buddies finally hit the pop-metal jackpot

"We love our country, and we like it loud," Big Kenny Alphin and John Rich declare on >>

BIG & RICH: MARINA CHAVEZ; WHITE STRIPES: AUTUMN DE WILDE

INTERPOL

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"Why yes, we will loan you some varnish, ma'am."

PRETTY HATE MACHINE

The *Idol* grad eviscerates an ex—over and over

KELLY CLARKSON

MY DECEMBER ✪✪✪✪

RCA

LET'S START WITH the bad news. This album does not consist exclusively of "Since U Been Gone," Kelly Clarkson's sublime 2004 smash, played 14 times in a row. The good news? It's her best album yet.

"Since U Been Gone" announced Clarkson's transformation from technically gifted schlock merchant, but as far back as her early hit "Miss Independent," the inaugural Idol had found her big theme: the way exhilarating self-sufficiency and crushing loneliness are never far apart. Here, she explores this bind in engrossing detail. Cowritten by Clarkson and members of her touring band, *My December* is a breakup album in which breakups are world-upending plagues, somewhere between locusts and slaying-of-the-firstborn in intensity. Clarkson has never sounded this depressive or spiteful. (No wonder her label reportedly had qualms about releasing it.)

Thankfully, moodiness never sinks the music. The girl still knows how to hustle for votes, and she bundles bleak lyrics (about "secrets eating at the core of me" and the jealous misery of seeing "babies everywhere I look") with upbeat assaults and gliding refrains. When the tempos drop, she flaunts a talent they don't teach on *Idol*: subtlety. On the gorgeously laconic "Irvine," her hazy sigh suggests she's fading out of existence.

It's hard not to root for this heroine, or wish she'd put away her diary, go outside and get laid; she deserves it. The closest she comes is "Be Still," in which a two-note groove suggests a laid-back booty call. "Slow, slow it down," Clarkson pleads. For all her anger, she's still an optimist: It's a moment of tentative hope, and she wants it to last.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "Never Again," "Be Still," "Don't Waste Your Time"

their third album. No kidding: They still approach their genre as if it were meant for arenas instead of honky-tonks, complete with hair-metal guitars and tailgate-party lyrics. They overplayed their hand on the dreadful yahoo-rock of 2005's *Comin' to Your City*, but this time they opt for earnestness over foolishness. It suits them far better: The title song and "You Never Stop Loving Somebody," rich with downcast majesty, are flawless examples of how to merge stadium-rock dynamics and heartache harmonies without degrading either. Minus any redneck shtick, their wedding-dance power ballads and self-referential rockers work too. They can still be their own worst enemies—having Wyclef Jean rap about Kenny Rogers doesn't even work on paper—but for once, such lapses seem like minor swerves in the road, not car wrecks.

DAVID BROWNE

DOWNLOAD: "Between Raising Hell and Amazing Grace," "You Never Stop Loving Somebody," "High Five"

BON JOVI

LOST HIGHWAY ✪✪✪

ISLAND/MERCURY NASHVILLE

New Jersey institution relocates to Nashville for a countrified 10th studio album

It's not merely a song, it's a multi-platform marketing scheme: Bon Jovi and Big & Rich collaborating on a theme song for the Arena Football League, where (ahh, synergy) Jon Bon Jovi co-owns the Philadelphia franchise. "We Got It Going On" is heinous musically, morally and spiritually, from its doom-mongering bass line and talk-box guitar to its pilfered lyrics ("shake your moneymaker," "can I get a witness") to its mock-preacher rap conflating team pep with a call for world peace. But most heinous of all is its infernal catchiness. Luckily, Bon Jovi's country-music move yields just that one irritant. The Nashville-smitten "I Love This Town" spells out in words what the pedal steel and fiddle in the arrangement already said. "Lost Highway" eschews the existential complexity of its Hank Williams title in favor of open-road rah-rah-ing. Gas prices, global warming and the Iraq war be damned—extreme times call for extreme escapism.

ASTONISHING FACT!
JON BON JOVI's favorite drink is called a muff dive; it contains two parts vodka, one part cranberry juice and one part peach schnapps.

KAREN SCHOEMER

DOWNLOAD: "Seat Next to You," "Whole Lot of Leavin'"

Dizzee Rascal would like his bicycle back.

DIZZEE RASCAL

MATHS & ENGLISH ✪✪✪✪

XL

England's great, gun-toting MC stops looking over his shoulder and starts looking up

"There's a world outside of the hood, and I want you to see it," Dizzee Rascal raps on his third album's opening track. For the past four years, 22-year-old Dylan Mills has made claustrophobia a brutal art, painting his East London ghetto in pistol-grip black and chalk-outline >>

DIZZEE RASCAL: DEAN CHALKLEY.

DEEP CLASSIC ROCK	CH.40
'80s HARD ROCK	CH.41
HEAVY METAL	CH.42
INDIE/COLLEGE/UNSIGNED	CH.43
CLASSIC ALTERNATIVE	CH.44
ADULT ALBUM ROCK	CH.45
EARLY CLASSIC ROCK	CH.46
NEW ALTERNATIVE ROCK	CH.47
NEW HARD ROCK	CH.48
LATER CLASSIC ROCK	CH.49
ACOUSTIC ROCK	CH.50
EMERGING ARTISTS	CH.52
PUNK/HARDCORE/SKA	CH.53
'90s ALTERNATIVE ROCK	CH.54

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We Are The Night

The Chemical Brothers redefine a genre that they brought to the masses a decade ago.

We Are The Night is the extraordinary new album that pushes their sonic mastercraft and songwriting to a new level.

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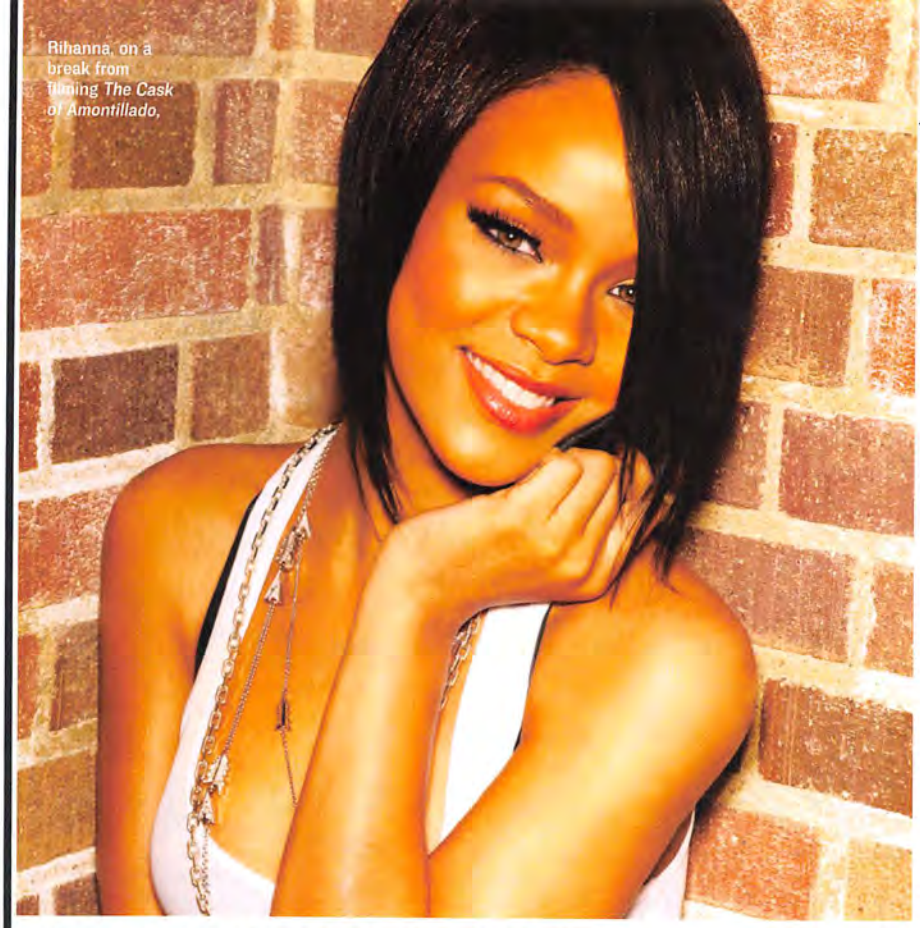


Rihanna, on a break from filming *The Cask of Amontillado*.

STORMY WEATHER

Barbadian R&B princess goes clubbing—and a little bit nuts

RIHANNA

GOOD GIRL GONE BAD ✪✪✪½

DEF JAM

"PON DE REPLAY," the spry dancehall hit that introduced Rihanna, had a simple division of labor: She supplied the melody; the beat supplied the personality. Her vocals were unobtrusive and her lyrics, impelling people to dance and imploring a DJ to play the song over and over, were utilitarian to the point of self-effacement. The song stalled at No. 2, behind Mariah Carey's summer melodrama "We Belong Together"—the rookie with a modest voice losing out to the vet dialing back her ginormousness. On Rihanna's next hit, "S.O.S.," a Soft Cell sample did the heavy lifting while she wove gingerly around it. The song landed at No. 1, making Rihanna a bona fide pop star who didn't quite seem like one.

As the title suggests, on album three Rihanna (and her songwriters) try to remedy her apparent identity deficiency. She's chosen a bunch of fiery roles that even *she* can't dull up: a betrayed lover turned house-trashing psycho on "Breaking Dishes"; a skip-the-foreplay-let's-fuck-now lover on "Shut Up and Drive"; a gleeful gold digger on the tuba-laced Timbaland standout "Let Me Get That." It's a blast to hear, even if she never sounds as dangerous as she'd like. At the same time, "S.O.S."'s winning formula is in full effect: Song after song puts a giant '80s dance beat front and center. On the booming house track "Don't Stop the Music," Norwegian producers Stargate make like a slightly more sanitary Daft Punk; and "Push Up on Me" resembles a horny "Planet Rock."

But "Umbrella" is, by far, the album's highlight because, for once, Rihanna doesn't merely complement the production, she matches its bizarre appeal. The drums are fat and live-sounding, the roaring guitars processed to sound like synths (or vice versa)—lose the cyborg vibe and it could be an Avril Lavigne single. But "Umbrella" would be far less engrossing if it wasn't for the way Rihanna disassembles its ungainly title into 11 hypnotic, tongue-flicking syllables. For this otherwise competent singer, it's an inspired breakthrough. Mentor Jay-Z appears up top for eight charismatic bars, but don't be surprised if, by song's end, she's made you forget he was there at all.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "Umbrella," "Push Up on Me"

>RIHANNA'S CURRENT LISTENING

BRANDY
AFRODISIAC *ATLANTIC*

TIMBALAND
TIMBALAND PRESENTS SHOCK VALUE *INTERSCOPE*

RIHANNA: ROBERTO D'ESTE.

white. But where once he growled his rhymes through gritted teeth or abortively gulped them down altogether, now the beats let him breathe. The flossy-synthed "Bubbles" luxuriates in the good life, and "Hard Back (Industry)" imparts flinty wisdom to aspiring rappers—*Letters to a Young Poet* via the council estate. On the sly, breezy "Wanna Be" he teams up with U.K. popstress Lily Allen to laugh at a wanksta, not shoot at him (best line: "Your mom buys your bling"). At the end, Dizzee lets out a hearty chuckle; for a second, it almost feels like escape.

JOSH EELLS

DOWNLOAD: "Sirens," "Bubbles," "Wanna Be" (Feat. Lily Allen)

JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN

REAL LIFE ✪✪✪½

CHEAP LULLABY

After years on the indie-folk sidelines, longtime bit player delivers fully formed debut

ULTRA-VIOLINS

Given the company that Joan Wasser has kept over the years, it's no surprise that her first album is heavy on emotive torch songs and introspective ballads. She's toured with diva crooners Rufus Wainwright and Antony, and she was close to the late troubadours Jeff Buckley (an ex) and Elliott Smith (the subject of the closing track, "We Don't Own It"). What's unexpected, though, is the sheer poise of Wasser's direct yet delicate compositions. She's a trained violinist, but her primary instrument is her throaty quaver of a voice. From the opening title track, on which she works up the nerve to utter the name of a distant lover, to the Smith elegy, which quietly separates the private man from his public myth, this is a most unlikely debut: a model of maturity and understatement.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "We Don't Own It," "Eternal Flame," "Christobel"

R. KELLY

DOUBLE UP ✪✪✪½

JIVE

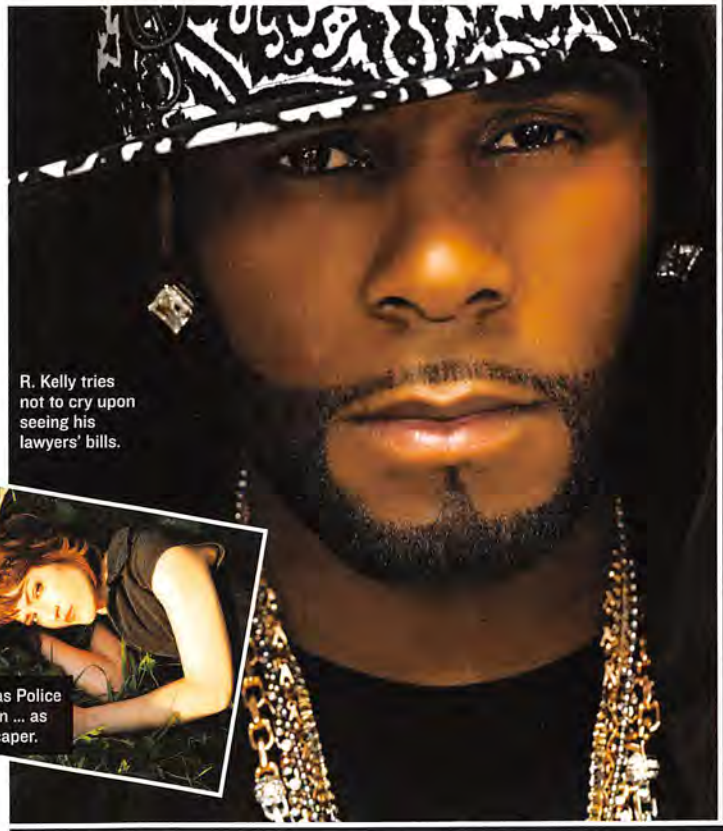
The 40-year-old anti-virgin returns—and guess what's on his mind ...

Robert Kelly can't help himself. R&B's foremost booty connoisseur—still awaiting trial for his 2002 child-porn charge—can fill his eighth album with PG-rated club joints, *sprechgesang* operettas, even grandiose inspirational ballads; in the end, it's just foreplay. Kelly's true genius is the metaphor-laden sex jam, and *Double Up* has some great ones. "Sweet Tooth" is filthy enough to make the randiest dentist blush ("I'm all up in your middle/Ooh, it tastes like Skittles"), and the sultry "Sex Planet" promises a trip through space to (ahem) Uranus. Jungle-steamy "The Zoo" even introduces a new species—the Sexasaurus. But there's also some darkness lurking beneath the sheets. When Kells moans about making love behind bars, or being "locked up in a cage of ecstasy," it's hard not to hear a twinge of guilt—the knotty lust of a man imprisoned by his own freakiness.

JOSH EELLS

DOWNLOAD: "Sex Planet," "I'm a Flirt" (Remix)

ASTONISHING FACT!
R. KELLY signed a contract and played during the 1997 season with the Atlantic City Seagulls of the United States Basketball League.



R. Kelly tries not to cry upon seeing his lawyers' bills.

Joan as Police Woman ... as landscaper.

TALIB KWELI

EAR DRUM ✪✪✪½

BLACKSMITH/WARNER BROS.

Admired rap idealist who seems to write his rhymes on a chalkboard

Having spent a decade on the verge of stardom, hyper-passionate Brooklynite >>

> I LOVE THIS CD!

JONNY LEE MILLER

LILY ALLEN
ALRIGHT, STILL
CAPITOL

"I love the sound of her voice. Her phrasing is fantastic. And when I'm in L.A., the song 'LDN' makes me feel closer to home."

KAISER CHIEFS
Yours Truly, Angry Mob

"Angry Mob delivers 13 consistently catchy tracks that bounce unrelenting" "★★★★"!!! — *Blender*

Download This "(Ruby is) a supremely catchy ode to infatuation" A- — *Entertainment Weekly*

"The range is from superior to superb on one of the few new albums you can safely certify as filler-free" "★★★★"!! —*USA Today*

KELLY: GARY LAND; JOAN AS POLICE WOMAN: SHANE VAN LUTHEREN; MILLER: DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/WIREIMAGE.

"Qui a coupé la fromage?" "Moi."

> THE CD WE'RE TOTALLY GAY FOR

JUSTICE

† ✪✪✪✪

ED BANGER/BECAUSE/VICE

Paris DJ squad makes the world's best ABBA-inspired, heavy-metal jock jams

"No need to ask my name to figure out how cool I am!" sings a guest vocalist on the frenzied debut LP from this electronic-disco duo, whose name is pronounced *zhust-EECE*. Backed by Ed Banger, France's hipster-hedonist It label, Xavier de Rosnay and Gaspard Augé employ everything from ominous Christian iconography to slick future sounds to prop up their aura of over-arching coolness: Sonically, they like to spike Chic-on-speed funk with monstrous, distorted synths that pulverize as much as they propel. Crucially, though, Justice's hard-partying robo-crunch is laced with a willful silliness: "Waters of Nazareth" is Fatboy Slim sent through a trash compactor, while a children's choir delivers cheerleader chirps on "D.A.N.C.E." Nothing is too anthemic for them, nothing too dumb: Think Andrew W.K. with a Gauloise dangling from his mouth, just so.

RYAN DOMBAL

DOWNLOAD: "Waters of Nazareth," "DVNO," "Phantom Pt. II"

Talib Kweli is slowly becoming hip-hop's underdog emeritus. While his sixth solo disc can't escape his limitations as a rapper, it is also a reminder of why he counts Jay-Z and 50 Cent among his fans. His workmanlike flow punctuates the lean, chest-thumping "Say Something" and the rapid-fire wallops of "Country Cousins," which features reunited Southern legends U.G.K. But Kweli's rigid delivery and obsession with self-empowerment remain liabilities—Kanye West's cabaret-riffing "In the Mood" clashes with Kweli's monotone, while the anti-establishment aphorisms of "Hostile Gospel" feel as rote and toothless as they did the first time around.

HUA HSU

DOWNLOAD: "Country Cousins," "Soon the New Day"

Marilyn Manson, for Revlon.

MARILYN MANSON

EAT ME DRINK ME ✪✪✪½

INTERSCOPE

Banned-in-the-'90s singer smears his mascara on a teary breakup album

In the past, if you'd wanted to know whether Marilyn Manson had a heart, you'd have needed an autopsy. He's the last of rock's lifestyle Satanists, a great salesman and spokesperson whose music has never been as compelling as his interviews or costumes. Perhaps it was the end of his yearlong marriage to burlesque dancer Dita Von Teese, but 13 years into his career, Manson sounds positively human. His indolent rasp has taken on depth and softness, so even his sex-equals-pain routine feels less like a sadistic pose than the summing up of a messy (and probably kinky) relationship. And despite the stiff beats—the undead, apparently, are not very funky—Tim Sköld's guitar is warm and unhurried, full of shifting layers. Manson's music still evokes decay, but he sounds more fertile than ever.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Heart Shaped Glasses," "The Red Carpet Grave"

PAUL McCARTNEY

MEMORY ALMOST FULL ✪✪✪

HEAR MUSIC

One of rock's greatest living songwriters looks cheerfully at death

Senior citizenship, which Paul McCartney attained on June 18, is looking as rosy today for the cherubic ex-Beatle as it did 40 years ago when he anticipated being 64. And death? It's the great reward. In "End of the End," the grandest song on his new album of retrospective memory flashes, he assures us, "It's the start of a journey to a much better place." The voice is wizened but spry. The oompah-oompah music-hall bounce, jolly sing-along tunes and attitude of playful whimsy haven't changed. McCartney muses on everything from his career to retro fashion to (obliquely) the end of his marriage to Heather Mills. "On the day that I die, I'd like jokes to be told and stories of old/To be rode on like carpets that children have played on," he sings. Unlike many of his peers, Grandpa is an optimist.

STEPHEN HOLDEN

DOWNLOAD: "End of the End"

ASTONISHING FACT!
The tattoos on QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE founder and frontman Josh Homme's hands are the initials of his beloved grandparents.

PARAMORE

RIOT! ✪✪✪

FUELED BY RAMEN

Warped Tour's breakout princess

Hayley Williams is vengeance in size-5 Chucks. Tinier than most amps, the 18-year-old Paramore singer belts full-throated castigations that reduce commitment-phobic emo boys to quivering puddles of shame and eyeliner. Her Tennessee crew's second album isn't as charmingly precocious as the first; the rest of the band—two under-21 brothers and their bass-playing buddy—stay mostly in the background, offering serviceable pop-punk riffs but never outshining the star. When it comes to romance, Williams is a scrapper through and through: Nearly every song here is about holding on tight, not giving up, not taking no for an answer. "Why don't you stand up, be a man?" she pleads on the opening track—as much a taunt as a wish to understand. Clinging to hope like it's a barnacle, she's emo's version of Jennifer Hudson—"And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going, LOL."

JOSH EELLS

DOWNLOAD: "Misery Business," "Crushcrushcrush"

QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE

ERA VULGARIS ✪✪½

INTERSCOPE

Fifth album from L.A. rockers both decries and embodies vulgarity

Queens of the Stone Age records have always been a little glazed and dystopian: Starting with their self-titled 1998 debut, each one relies on easy-tempo, robot-stoner rock, with machinelike beats and riffs and Josh Homme's antiromantic crooning. But where there used to be a kind of slow-breaking release, here the songs turn to forced marches, with an atmosphere of claustrophobic creepiness. A few tracks bring out Homme's shrewd, aerated sense of pop dynamics—"Into the Hollows," "Misfit Love"—but generally the record is a downer. Scraps of good melodic ideas lose out under queasy, scuffed and distorted tones, and lyrics that play the zero-sum game of both reviling and loving American teen-trash culture. This might add up to a cry of pain, except Homme doesn't seem like a true void-dweller: at root he's ironic and idealistic, with lyrics like "My generation's for sale/Beats a steady job/How much have you got?"

BEN RATLIFF

DOWNLOAD: "Sick, Sick Sick" >>

> I LOVE THIS CD!

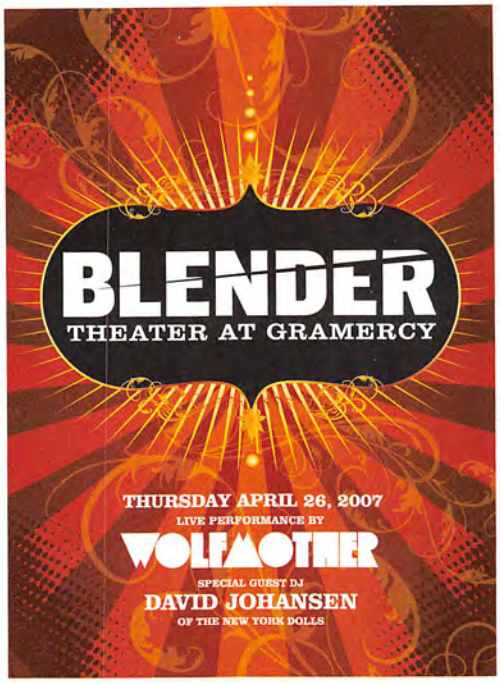
AMY POEHLER

SUFJAN STEVENS
ILLINOISE
ASTHMATIC KITTY

"He has such a beautiful voice. And that song about John Wayne Gacy—oh, dude, that is so depressing."

JUSTICE: MARCO DOS SANTOS; MANSON: PEROU; POEHLER: GRAYLOCK.COM/RETNA

WOLFMOTHER



DAVID JOHANSEN

CONTESTS, EVENTS AND OTHER FUN STUFF WE THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT.

GUESTLIST

BLENDER THEATER AT GRAMERCY

ON APRIL 26TH BLENDER ROCKED NEW YORK CITY, celebrating the opening of the all-new **Blender Theater at Gramercy**. More than 600 rock-obsessed fans gathered for a first look at Blender's new music venue, headlined by a live performance from Grammy-winning Australian supergroup **Wolfmother**. David Johansen started things off with a live DJ set from the balcony seats as NYC music-industry elite, uptown celebs and downtown hipsters rocked the night away. Up next, don't miss 260 hot live performances, including Rufus Wainwright, Pretty Girls Make Graves, Motion City Soundtrack and many more...

BLENDER PUBLISHER LEE ROSENBAUM, WOLFMOTHER'S ANDREW STOCKDALE AND BRUCE MORAN OF LIVE NATION

THE BLENDER THEATER AT GRAMERCY STAGE

Billy Corgan's new look? Police-sketch chic.

PEOPLE PERSON

Rock mastermind returns with a big, mushy message: love

SMASHING PUMPKINS

ZEITGEIST ✪✪✪

MARTHA'S MUSIC/REPRISE

BILLY CORGAN NEEDS some new friends. The Uncle Fester of alternative rock used to have lots: Laser-show fantasias like 1993's *Siamese Dream* created a Smashing Pumpkins Nation by making geeky angst feel heroic. But when the band smashed into a wall of drugs and acrimony, Corgan turned needy—offering a leftover album online for free in 2000, even trying to start a reunion via a newspaper ad (bassist D'Arcy Wretzky and guitarist James Iha must get their news from TV, as only loyal drummer Jimmy Chamberlin turned up).

If Corgan's longing for connection sounds kinda emo, it should: He was turning pain into pomp before My Chemical Romance cracked a *Goosebumps* book. And the first Pumpkins album in seven years is a plea for love and meaning in a disaffected era. The most awe-inspiring track is called "United States," a complex, nine-minute maelstrom where Corgan keens, "Let me prove something real—like I should" in full dweeb-king wail. There's even a drum solo. *Zeitgeist*'s orgy of avalanche rhythms, cascading riffs and sky-licking guitar is as grandiose as ever (the solo on "Tarantula" sounds like a nuke hitting a Guitar Center), but the bombast is softened as Corgan reaches out for shame-sharing community.

"We can fail in style," he sings on the symphonic slow dance "Pomp and Circumstance." But as he emerges from the eternal midnight of the crushingly heavy "7 Shades of Black" into morning bliss on "Bring the Light," he finds something his inheritors are too cool for: sweet, goofy hope. When he sings "we are stars," he isn't just talking about himself and his guitar tech. He's including us, too. Corgan needs all the Pumpkin People he can yank into his orbit.

JON DOLAN

DOWNLOAD: "Doomsday Clock," "Bring the Light"

Blender Approved.

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A Weekend in the City

Permanent Me
After the Room Clears

Punk Goes Acoustic Vol. 2
Various Artists

The Hold Steady
Boys and Girls in America

Maximo Park
Our Earthly Pleasures

The Shins
Wincing the Night Away

Bright Eyes
Cassadaga

The Fratellis
Costello Music

THE SAINTS

IMPERIOUS DELIRIUM ✪✪✪½

WILDFLOWER

Thirty years later, class-of-'77 Aussie trio reconsecrates itself to punk

Balancing a Stooges-style isolation lament atop a razor-keen riff, the Saints' 1977 "(I'm) Stranded" announced the existence of Australian punk. Now singer Chris Bailey, the only remaining original Saint, has thrashed his way back to the starting point, divesting horns and strings to arrive at the live-in-the-studio directness of ravers like "Drunk in Babylon." Although the latter-day Saint recounts a happy close encounter in—pardon his French—"Je Fuckin' T'Aime," the typical tune finds him lost, angry and wasted. Bailey occasionally turns poetic or political, toasting original Commie Mikhail Bakunin in "Drowning," the most "Stranded"-like track. But mainly he revisits his teenage self, brooding as if he just got his first zit.

MARK JENKINS

DOWNLOAD: "Drunk in Babylon," "Drowning"

VELVET REVOLVER

LIBERTAD ✪✪✪½

RCA

Grunge grad gets his horndog on

Scott Weiland's rehab-heavy rap sheet has "tortured artist" written all over it, but with Velvet Revolver, his wildly popular collaboration with Slash and the other guys from Guns N' Roses, he's worked a different archetype: pissed-off rock star. On this tightly coiled second album, he warily addresses a young junkie runaway and an aging junkie rock star—affectingly and not without narrative flair—but if his come-hither howl is suited to advocating anything, it's giving in to illicit sexual urges ("Just Sixteen"). The music, all cowbell, big choruses and bigger riffs, fuels his exuberance, even as heartache lurks in his voice.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Pills, Demons & Etc.," "Mary Mary"

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The best releases from the past months

TORI AMOS

AMERICAN DOLL POSSE

EPIC

Featuring alter egos and MILF references, Amos's new album is totally coconuts—and totally great.

FEIST

THE REMINDER

CHERRYTREE/INTERSCOPE

From a Montreal hipster, hushed indie folk to soundtrack your next breakup or Coffee Bean run.

BRAKESBRAKESBRAKES

THE BEATIFIC VISIONS

ROUGH TRADE

Disenchanted punk from a first-class shouter—fast as a Formula One car and almost as loud.

NE-YO

BECAUSE OF YOU

DEF JAM

The "So Sick" dude returns, with more lovelorn crooning and jams to get that booty a-movin'.

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ETERNAL YOUTH

The noise-soaked pinnacle of '80s indie rock, now made *even better* (BY DOUGLAS WOLK)

SONIC YOUTH

DAYDREAM NATION ★★★★★

GEFFEN

SCAVENGERS. GUERRILLAS. MAD scientists. In 1988, indie-rock bands were all of these things. Wearing musty T-shirts and living out of vans, a handful of hard-touring groups from L.A. or Minneapolis or Boston paid close attention to one another and thrived on competition and cooperation. Mainstream culture ignored them, so they found their own incubators: zines, clubs, college radio stations. And Sonic Youth's ambitious, glorious sixth album cemented their position as the emperors of this small national scene by reshaping it to orbit around themselves and their downtown–New York neighborhood.

Daydream Nation is communitarian from its title to its music, with riffs piling up as the band's three singers trade off songs. It echoes and builds on the eccentric roars of peers like Dinosaur Jr, Hüsker Dü and the Minutemen (whose bassist, Mike Watt, appears in answering-machine-message form on "Providence"). But Sonic Youth's notion of a scene extended beyond music—hence the so-unpunk-it's-hardcore cover art (a Gerhard Richter painting of a candle) and lyrics that allude to cyberpunk and other fashionable literary subcultures of the day. They also aligned themselves with the bohemian tradition of downtown New York, beyond the ear-blistering "no wave" scene they'd outgrown: "Eric's Trip" sprouts from a few lines of an Andy Warhol movie, and guitarist Thurston Moore imagines East Village streets as an iridescent science-fiction landscape in "Candle" and "Hyperstation."

But the aim wouldn't have mattered without the firepower. *Daydream Nation* made Sonic Youth the most important band of their scene because it delivered on everything they'd been trying to pull off for seven years: massive, hair-through-the-air rock & roll that functions equally well as make-it-new high art. It was originally a double LP, and its songs build up heat and momentum for seven minutes or more.

Moore documents his physical and mental landscape ("It's gettin' kinda quiet in my city's head/It takes a teenage riot to get me out of bed right now"); bassist Kim Gordon rasps a cultural critique ("Are you for sale?/Does 'fuck you' sound simple enough?"); guitarist Lee Ranaldo goes the free-associative, psychedelic route ("Rain King in chains has nowhere to go/His jet-stream daydream cocksure hard-luck show"). But the songs don't feel entirely discrete. They seem to accumulate into one long suite of gauze and razor blades, a passionate psalm to electric guitars and their limitless possibility of textures—from the dissonant, drifting strums that open the album to the ZZ Top–via–thrash seizure that ends it.

Still, the album didn't account for the screech and scorch of Sonic Youth's live buzz storms—like every other indie-rock band, they built their reputation one club at a time. So the "Live Daydream" that occupies most of the second disc of this expanded reissue is a marvel: live versions of every song, recorded just before or after the studio takes, which are often even more savagely rapturous. (The songs have stuck in the band's repertoire, too; this summer, they'll play the whole record live on tour.) The Youth of '88 were tribute-album sluts, and the set is filled out by Beatles, Mudhoney, Neil Young and Captain Beefheart covers from the same period.

For better, and often worse, the album crystallized indie-rock's all-over-the-place phase; plenty of bands began to paraphrase *Daydream Nation*, playing "New York–style music," whether or not they lived in New York. Almost 20 years later, though, the album seems to have barely aged. It still evokes a utopian underground full of hungry, messy young artists at the moment they heard the piercing squeal that signaled them to break out and start the riot they'd been promising.

Download: "Silver Rocket," "The Sprawl" (Live), "Eric's Trip"

Sonic Youth, 1988 (from left): Thurston Moore, Kim Gordon, Steve Shelley and Lee Ranaldo.

MASSIVE, HAIR-THROUGH-THE-AIR ROCK & ROLL, ONE LONG SUITE OF GAUZE AND RAZOR BLADES.

< THE SCORE >	
✪✪✪✪✪	CLASSIC
✪✪✪✪	GREAT
✪✪✪	GOOD
✪✪	MEDIOCRE
✪	FOUL

The Afghan Whigs, in their short-lived a cappella phase.

The 4 Seasons, after finding a two-for-one red cardigan sale.

THE AFGHAN WHIGS

UNBREAKABLE (A RETROSPECTIVE 1990–2006) ✪✪✪

RHINO/ELEKTRA

Soul-influenced '90s rockers from Cincinnati liken relationships to prison, slavery, den of lies

"I got a dick for a brain/And my brain is gonna sell my ass to you," head Whig Greg Dulli announces by way of introduction to the ladies on "Be Sweet," from the band's 1993 major-label debut, *Gentlemen*. The swaggering dickhead and the knowing misogynist were characters Dulli would return to again and again as a way of exploring the dark side of relationships. And thanks to a rakish charm, he could be honest about being dishonest, without coming across as totally despicable ("I'll be kind when I deceive you," he sings). Musically, the Whigs—who disbanded in 2001—managed no small feat, paying homage to their Motown and Stax faves while still sounding decidedly like white alternative-rock dudes. While not a bad introduction, *Unbreakable* suffers from scattershot sequencing and the absence of some of the band's most bruising material. Two new songs, which they recorded during a studio-only reunion last year, add little. It would appear the romance—make that *lust*—is gone.

MARK YARM

DOWNLOAD: **"Be Sweet," "Turn on the Water"**

NICK DRAKE

FAMILY TREE ✪✪✪

TSUNAMI LG/FONTANA

Home tapes of a British folkie who OD'd on antidepressants at age 26

THE ORIGINAL BUMMER

It may seem odd that Nick Drake's juvenilia—pre-professional tracks recorded mostly at his parents' home in the late '60s—are being released when similar tapes by more famous artists remain unheard. But maybe Drake's fragility demands greater explanation. His weird magic lay in his approximation of confidentiality and in that special ingredient in his voice, a disembodied hauteur. There are wise, focused versions of his sources: songs by Bob Dylan and the English folksinger Bert Jansch, plus chamber-music Mozart, with Drake on clarinet, and even recordings of his mother, Molly—who, like Nick, had a quiet, accurate and commanding voice. Rather than adding to the nebulous myth of Nick Drake as a haunted depressive, this classy, family-sanctioned project demonstrates that introspection was his birthright and his training. It may even stop you from ever feeling sorry for him again, which is just as well.

BEN RATLIFF

DOWNLOAD: **"All My Trials," "Kimbie"**

ROBERT FORSTER AND GRANT MCLENNAN

INTERMISSION: THE BEST OF THE SOLO RECORDINGS 1990–1997 ✪✪✪

BEGGARS BANQUET

The best solo work by two singer-songwriters who worked best together

Robert Forster and Grant McLennan formed one of rock's immortal partnerships co-fronting the Go-Betweens. The wordy, worldly Australians split up in 1989 after six critically adored albums, then re-formed in 2000 for a triumphant second act, cut short last year when McLennan died of a heart attack at 48. A few of these tracks—McLennan's wistful "Haven't I Been a Fool," Forster's quizzical "Baby Stones"—match the Go-Betweens' peak, but for the most part, each haunted the other's solo career like a phantom limb. McLennan's sun-kissed reveries lack Forster's oddball touch. Forster's rambling song-stories cry out for McLennan's surging melodies. This recap of their years apart serves as a reminder of how great they were together.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: **"Baby Stones," "Haven't I Been a Fool"**

FRANKIE VALLI & THE 4 SEASONS

JERSEY BEAT: THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE VALLI & THE 4 SEASONS ✪✪✪✪

RHINO

Godfathers lay groundwork for Scorsese, Coppola, *The Sopranos*

It wasn't easy for an Italian street kid to act tender in the early '60s—when Francis Castelluccio sang, out came a falsetto shriek as delicate as an ambulance siren. Despite their near-Neanderthal simplicity, 4 Seasons hits like "Big Girls Don't Cry" and "Walk Like a Man" got at an essence of yearning that spanned doo-wop and schmaltz and can still reduce one's inner Bluto to blubber. This three-CD, one-DVD collection is a testament to tenacity: They rode out the British Invasion, experimented with psychedelia and cashed in on disco with "Grease." And their sidewalk grit never faltered: Taping for a TV audience of mod Brits in 1971, the group looked ridiculous in velvet suits and goombah mustaches, but they sounded sublime.

KAREN SCHOEMER

DOWNLOAD: **"She Gives Me Light," "Patch of Blue"**

BLENDER APPROVED

The best reissues from the past months

PAULA ABDUL

GREATEST HITS—STRAIGHT UP!

VIRGIN

Before she was fawning over lightweight pop-star wannabes, *American Idol*'s ditzy judge made a pretty good pop star herself.

LEONARD COHEN

SONGS OF LEONARD COHEN

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

A brilliantly crafted, pitch-perfect debut from the poet laureate of sex and death. Sin never sounded so miserable.

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ARETHA FRANKLIN PART I: THE '60S

A preacher's daughter and a teenage mom, she started out slow and stodgy on the way to becoming the Queen of Soul (BY DOUGLAS WOLK)

EVERY ORIGINAL CD REVIEWED

SHE'S ONE OF the greatest singers alive, so you wouldn't guess that most of Aretha Franklin's early albums are, deservedly, out of print. It took her years to find her voice—a commanding but nuanced roar that drew deep, precise emotion out of everything she sang—and win the title Queen of Soul. The daughter of star Detroit preacher the Rev. C.L. Franklin Aretha was brought up singing gospel and recorded her first single at the age of 14. By 20, she'd decided to "go pop," like her idol Sam Cooke, and Columbia Records gave her star treatment. But whether it was the fault of hapless producers or her own flamboyantly dodgy taste, she spent most of the next half-decade recording easy-listening ballads, and tepid pop and jazz standards, scoring a few minor hits and building a reputation as a live performer. Finally in 1967 she got a new label (Atlantic), a new producer (Jerry Wexler) and a new sound—earthy, gospel-inspired soul. "Respect" instantly became an anthem for both feminism and the civil rights movement, and kick-started her career, earning Franklin the first of eight consecutive Grammy awards for Best Female R&B Vocal Performance.

Aretha Franklin, before taking an accidental drag of eyeliner.

ESSENTIAL

ARETHA

COLUMBIA, 1961

✪✪✪✪

Producer John Hammond wanted to make Aretha a blues singer and set her up with pianist Ray Bryant's group. It worked: The elegant, restrained record yielded two R&B hits, and you can hear her sneaking gospel inflections into secular love songs. The first of three albums with the same title, later reissued as *The First 12 Sides*. Out of print.

Download: "Today I Sing the Blues," "Won't Be Long"

I NEVER LOVED A MAN THE WAY I LOVE YOU

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1967

✪✪✪✪✪

The 10th album was her breakthrough, and all it took was a new label, a simpatico band of white guys from Alabama (recording mostly in New York) and songs that conflated spiritual, sexual and political demands. The title track and her spectacular version of Otis Redding's "Respect" were both No. 1 R&B hits, but every performance is a heart-stopper, from the blisteringly sexy "Dr. Feelgood" to covers of Sam Cooke and Ray Charles—her models for bringing the church to the soul charts.

Download: "I Never Loved a Man," "Do Right Woman—Do Right Man"

LADY SOUL

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1968

✪✪✪✪✪

With ace soul musicians on board, she's in her element: "Chain of Fools" is tailor-made for her vocal acrobatics, and "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" was the most overt song about female sexuality that had ever been on the radio. (Amazingly, both are outtakes from her previous two albums.) And the slow-burning "Ain't No Way" came from a songwriter who knew Aretha's heart well: her sister and backup singer Carolyn.

Download: "A Natural Woman," "Ain't No Way," "Chain of Fools"

GREAT

RUNNIN' OUT OF FOOLS

COLUMBIA, 1964

✪✪✪

After four years, Columbia finally figured it might be a good idea to have her sing R&B. What she tackles here (with new producer Clyde Otis) are mostly other people's hits—Dionne Warwick's "Walk On By," Mary Wells's "My Guy"—but she heats them all at least to a simmer, and the title track (a minor hit) was the first time she reached the raging boil of her subsequent Atlantic-era recordings. Out of print.

Download: "Runnin' Out of Fools," "Every Little Bit Hurts"

ARETHA ARRIVES

ATLANTIC, 1967

✪✪✪✪

Her second Atlantic album gets a bad rap (and is out of print): Obviously cranked out in a hurry, it's heavy on the covers, and the R&B No. 1 hit "Baby, I Love You" is one of its few approximations of the gutsy soul vibe of *I Never Loved a Man*. Still, she makes the Rolling Stones' "Satisfaction" and ? and the Mysterians' "96 Tears" sound like they've always been soul songs, wails new life into some vintage blues and transforms "You Are My Sunshine" into a mighty gospel workout.

Download: "Baby, I Love You," "You Are My Sunshine"

ARETHA NOW

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1968

✪✪✪✪

It's essentially *Lady Soul II*, cut partly during the same sessions—but she was on a roll. Five of these 10 songs became hits, most notably the do-right-by-me demand "Think," recorded 11 days after Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination, which turns into a civil rights fist-pumper midway through. Stroke of genius: the Burt Bacharach/Hal David song "I Say a Little Prayer" sung as gospel. The album's release coincided with a *Time* cover story that revealed her marital problems; the CD version badly needs a sonic upgrade.

Download: "Think," "See Saw"

CHECK IT OUT

UNFORGETTABLE: A TRIBUTE TO DINAH WASHINGTON

COLUMBIA, 1964

✪✪

Franklin adored jazz star Washington, who died in December 1963. The repertoire is a step up from the dreck Franklin had been cutting, although her performances are still in thrall to the original versions. The breakthrough is "Soulville," where she gets loose for a change.

Download: "Soulville"

YOU GROW CLOSER

PEACOCK, 1965

✪✪✪

If the 16-year-old who cut most of these gospel standards in 1958 sounds startlingly mature, it could be that she was already a mom. If a lot of her style was borrowed from gospel empress Clara Ward, it could be because Franklin was 16. Warning: The sound quality is wretched. Also released as *Songs of Faith*.

Download: "Never Grow Old," "Precious Lord, Parts 1 & 2"

YEAH!!! ARETHA FRANKLIN IN PERSON

COLUMBIA, 1965

✪✪

After a little R&B success, she took another wrong turn, cutting jazz tunes. (It's a studio recording, despite the title—the applause is canned.) Her singing is a little too show-offish for the band's cocktail-hour vibe. Out of print.

Download: "Muddy Water"

SOUL '69

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1969

✪✪✪

Despite the title, her sixth album of new material in two years returns to big-band jazz. Released around the time of her divorce from Ted White, it focuses more than usual on brokenhearted kiss-offs.

Download: "The Tracks of My Tears," "Bring It On Home to Me"

BE CAREFUL

THE ELECTRIFYING ARETHA FRANKLIN

COLUMBIA, 1962

✪✪

Jazz standards with a big band and strings, on the model of Ray Charles's crossover records. She sounds trapped by the goopy arrangements—like she's trying to play the game, instead of making the rules. Out of print.

Download: "Rough Lover"

SOUL SISTER

COLUMBIA, 1966

✪✪

Better title: *Schmaltz Sister*. Columbia almost totally missed the boat as soul exploded in the mid-'60s, and this thrown-together bunch of recordings exemplifies why. It's got some wildly unfortunate leftovers from the vaults (including "Ol' Man River" and two Al Jolson covers) and a few decent hits cut with Clyde Otis. Out of print.

Download: "Can't You Just See Me"

TAKE A LOOK

COLUMBIA, 1967

✪✪

"Aretha? Oh, that girl who was on our label! I think there's some stuff lying around. An R&B hit from six years ago that we never put on an album. 'Lee Cross' again? Why not? The kids will buy anything with her name on it, I bet." Out of print.

Download: "Operation Heartbreak"

ARETHA IN PARIS

RHINO/ATLANTIC, 1968

✪✪

"That album embarrassed me," producer Jerry Wexler later said of this live disc. Aretha sings well, but the band is inferior to her studio crew, and she seems rushed and distracted. The problem might be explained by her bitter rendering of "I Never Loved a Man," in which she tells the audience she wants to "leave him in Paris with you."

Download: "Night Life"

FOR FANS ONLY

THE TENDER, THE MOVING, THE SWINGING ARETHA FRANKLIN

COLUMBIA, 1962

✪

Now managed by her husband, she switched producers, working with Robert Mersey, and ended up with more overpowering string sections and creaky oldies. Her version of "Try a Little Tenderness" predated Otis Redding's by four years and dented the bottom of the charts. Now import-only.

Download: "Try a Little Tenderness"

LAUGHING ON THE OUTSIDE

COLUMBIA, 1963

✪

More Mersey, more strings and an entire LP of lugubrious ballads. There've been attempts to rehabilitate this period of her career—the two-disc *The Queen in Waiting* is a reasonable survey. But once you've heard her good stuff, this mostly seems like a waste of talent.

Download: "Skylark"

TAKE IT LIKE YOU GIVE IT

COLUMBIA, 1967

✪

Franklin was an instant star at Atlantic, and Columbia issued this first round of leftovers—one of which, a steamy soul tune called "Lee Cross," became a small hit after "Respect" broke. The rest, mainly substandard standards, didn't make it onto her earlier albums for good reason. Out of print.

Download: "Lee Cross"

SOFT AND BEAUTIFUL

COLUMBIA, 1969

✪

A final round of barrel-scraping from Columbia, recorded when she was marketed as the next Barbra Streisand. Hearing her sing "People" over canned strings is a lot like watching Peyton Manning play tennis. Now import-only.

Download: None

FURTHER LISTENING

ERMA FRANKLIN GOLDEN CLASSICS

COLLECTABLES, 1993

✪✪✪

Aretha's big sister sang with her in the '60s, but Erma's brief solo career never went further than the original version of "Piece of My Heart," a Top 10 R&B hit before Janis Joplin universalized it. This peppy but stylistically scattered anthology collects some of her 1962–1968 singles.

Download: "Piece of My Heart," "I'm Just Not Ready for Love"

CAROLYN FRANKLIN SISTER SOUL

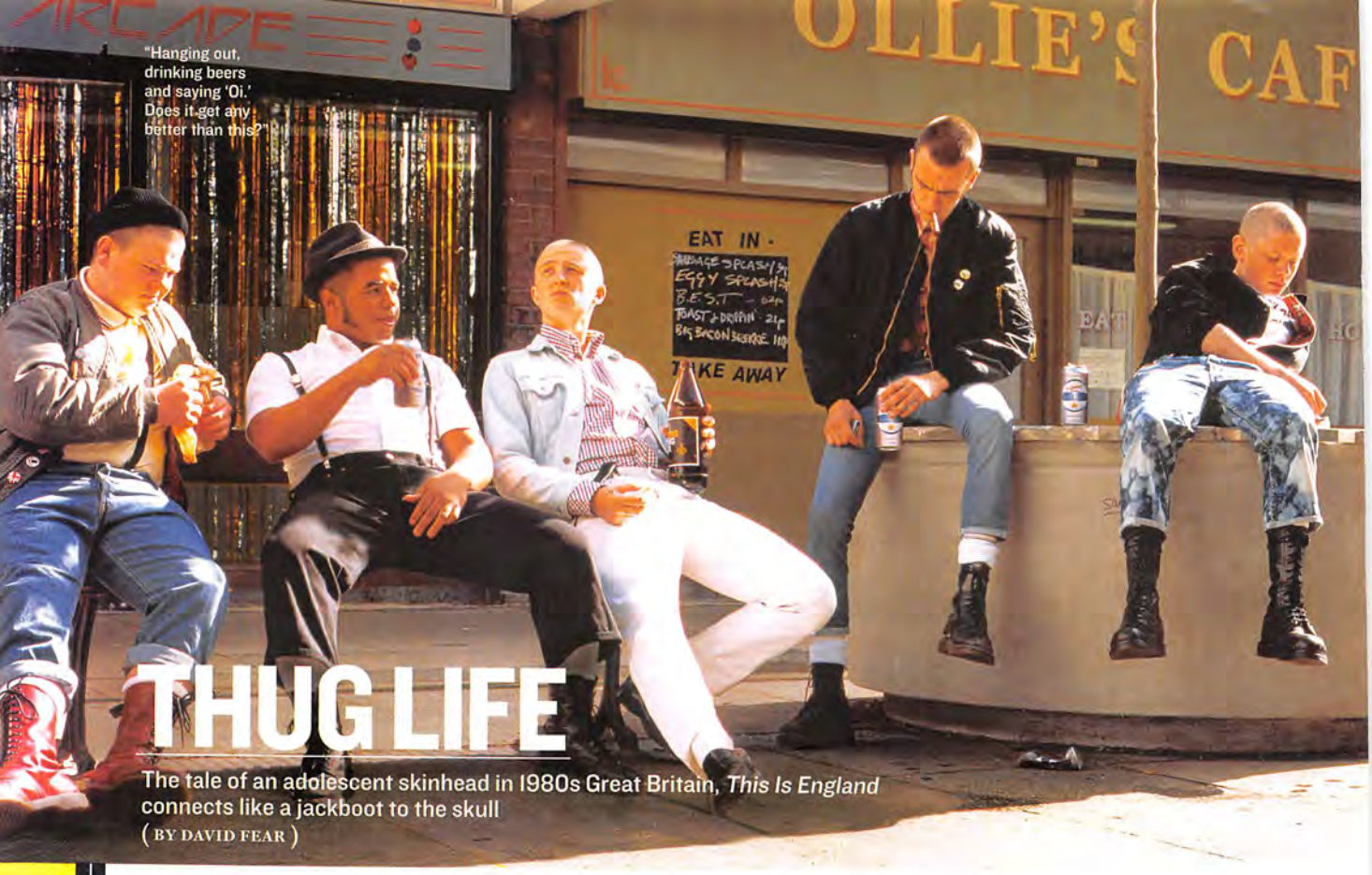
KENT, 2006

✪✪✪

Her voice was thinner and less flexible than Aretha's, and the four 1969–1976 albums cherry-picked here are more notable for their excellent songwriting (some of it by Carolyn herself) than for their mostly underdeveloped performances.

Download: "All I Want to Be Is Your Woman," "Chain Reaction"

COMING NEXT MONTH
PART 2: THE '70S TO THE PRESENT



"Hanging out, drinking beers and saying 'Oi.' Does it get any better than this?"

THUG LIFE

The tale of an adolescent skinhead in 1980s Great Britain, *This Is England* connects like a jackboot to the skull

(BY DAVID FEAR)

BRITISH DIRECTOR SHANE Meadows remembers the guilty pleasures of his youth, as evidenced by the opening credits of **THIS IS ENGLAND**. We're talking vintage footage of '80s touchstones: Rubik's Cubes, *Knight Rider*, New Romantic hairdos, *Space Invaders*. Only waxing nostalgic isn't really on the agenda; unlike many current films set during the '80s, Meadows's new movie doesn't seek to fetishize the era's disastrous fashion and cheesy novelties for giggles. Rather, he explores how a misfit kid stuck in a dead-end environment finds himself in an exotic—and dangerous—subculture too alluring to pass up.

Adolescent Shaun (newcomer Thomas Turgoose) spends his days mourning his dead dad and roaming his northern England neighborhood alone. Then he meets a charismatic skinhead who takes the kid into his gang of merry Two Tone punks. Shaun shaves his skull, adopts the uniform—boots, braces and Ben Sherman shirts—and discovers that listening to ska and trashing empty houses chases the blues away. (Meadows films these scenes of mostly harmless delinquency in a way that emphasizes the wanton, joyous rush of destruction; think *A Clockwork Orange*—minus the whole rape and assault thing.) Life is peachy until an older skinhead named Combo (Stephen Graham) shows up, complete with "immigrants go home" rants straight from the *Fascist 101* handbook. The smart kids split; Shaun, desperate for a father figure, falls under Combo's spell and ends up paying the price.

Like most boys-to-men stories, *This Is England* isn't immune to occasional lapses into sentimentality (the soundtrack's devolution from Desmond Dekker to tinkling-ivory sonatas is a misstep). Meadows, however, maintains such a fine balance between shepherding the narrative to its inevitable lost-innocence conclusion and exorcising his own youthful demons—the director has said his brief flirtation with the skinhead lifestyle inspired the story—that the film neutralizes any clichés. Even when the violence finally occurs, it isn't a sensationalistic *Romper Stomper* set piece, but the kind of short, sharp shock that you'd imagine would have stuck in a young Meadows's mind.

The director's heartfelt look at his own bygone wild days is the exact opposite of every slick, generic summer movie in theaters at the moment. To say this sucker punch of a film is just good counterprogramming would be to damn it with faint praise. Meadows takes a highly personal story and turns it into something both awe-inspiring and universal: Sheared hair and Dr. Martens aside, *This Is England* is at its heart a tale of innocence shattered beyond repair.

Of course, some folks never do let go of the '80s. Take hot-sauce-company owner Billy Mitchell, one of the subjects in Seth Gordon's documentary **THE KING OF KONG**. His mullet alone suggests that he's still stuck in the Reagan era, but Mitchell is particularly obsessed with 1982, the year he set the world-record high score in *Donkey Kong*. He parlayed that accomplishment into a tiny empire of celebrity, and his score remained uncontested ... until 2003, when Redmond, Washington's Steve Wiebe broke Mitchell's hold on the title. Mitchell disputed

THE EXCITED-O-METER

We haven't seen 'em yet ... and we're not even sure we want to

VERY EXCITED

THE SIMPSONS MOVIE

The film the Homer-quoting masses have been clamoring for! Four-hundred-plus episodes in, Springfield's first family finally gets its own feature outing.

EXCITED-ISH

TRANSFORMERS

We're not so psyched about Michael Bay (*Armageddon*) directing, but on the other hand: giant killer robots!

NOT SO MUCH

I NOW PRONOUNCE YOU CHUCK & LARRY

Kevin James and Adam Sandler fake being a gay married couple. What hack sitcom writer came up with this one?

THIS IS ENGLAND: DEAN ROGERS; *SIMPSONS*: MATT GROENING; *TRANSFORMERS*: DREAMWORKS LLC/PARAMOUNT; *CHUCK & LARRY*: TRACY BENNETT

King of Kong: Billy Mitchell, the world's sauciest video-game player.

You Kill Me: "That's Sir Ben Kingsley to you, scumbag."

the legitimacy of Wiebe's record; Wiebe then challenged Mitchell to a competitive *Kong*-off, something an arrogant Mitchell went out of his way to avoid. Watching Gordon's chronicle of two men fighting to be top dog of the retro-game world, you're never sure whether to laugh at the sheer geekiness on display from those who take this way too seriously or cheer on a battle between a little guy and an egocentric Goliath. You end up doing both, as well as walking away with an appreciation of how hard it is to jump over flaming barrels while facing off against a pixelized ape.

There's a nostalgia for a different decade in **YOU KILL ME**—one in which films involving professional killers and postmodern pulp ruled the land. Seemingly carbon-dated somewhere around 1995, this goons-and-guns fable revolves around a Buffalo, New York, hit man (Sir Ben Kingsley). Only, he's an alcoholic drying out in San Francisco and in love with a local (Téa Leoni), see? Considering the gangsters-in-therapy thing has been done to death, it was simply a matter of time before we got a movie about a made man in a 12-step program. Thank your own higher power that director John Dahl (*The Last Seduction*) is calling the shots; he's able to turn his lead character's realization that he loves whacking people into an ingenious moment of clarity. A lesser director would have made you pine for the golden age of Tarantino. Dahl's deft hand places *You Kill Me* a cut above the usual suspects.

KING OF KONG: PICTUREHOUSE; *YOU KILL ME*: TERRY WOWCHUCK; *HOT FUZZ*: MATT NETTHEIM; *KNOCKED UP*: SUZANNE HANOVER/UNIVERSAL PICTURES; BLASTONBURY: THINKFILM; SIXX: LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE.

BLENDER APPROVED

The best movies of the past months

HOT FUZZ
A buddy-cop spoof that boasts the most outrageous gunplay this side of an NRA mixer.

KNOCKED UP
The best movie about procreation since *Rosemary's Baby*.

LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?

NIKKI SIXX
MÖTLEY CRÜE

"*300* is insane. The cinematography was beautiful and the fight scenes badass. I liked the slow-motion work and the blood-spray effects."

MUSIC DVDS

Potters gone wild.

FIELD OF DREAMS

From Coldplay to naked hippies—a trippy documentary captures Britain's premier summer music festival in all its muddy glory

(BY RYAN DOMBAL)

GLASTONBURY *(THINKFILM)*

✪✪✪✪

BARE BREASTS. FLAMETHROWERS. People slathered in mud. A ballerina hanging from a huge balloon. No, it's not a Ray J sex tape—just some typical scenes from Glastonbury, the British summer festival that has attracted more than a million free-spirited revelers since 1970. This impressionistic documentary of the fest's history boasts performances from the likes of David Bowie, Radiohead and Coldplay; but the big-name music acts are only part of the story. Julien Temple, director of the classic Sex Pistols film *The Great Rock 'n' Roll Swindle*, mashes up footage from the past 35 years of the festival—witness both '70s hippies and the Bravery's bassist rocking out with their cocks out—to heady effect. The movie offers viewers the same crazed highs and lows as Glastonbury itself—no mind-bending substances necessary.

THE BEST OF THE REST

THE HENRY ROLLINS SHOW: SEASON I
(IFC)
✪✪
Rollins's trademark intensity doesn't translate well to the talk-show format: It's hard to watch the former Black Flag frontman's overly serious interviews with guests like Bill Maher and Kevin Smith—and then there are his terribly unfunny comedy bits. It's a shame that Rollins's generally excellent musical guests—Sleater-Kinney, Aimee Mann, Frank Black, Thom Yorke and Slayer—get only five minutes out of each half hour.

THE AMERICAN FOLK-BLUES FESTIVAL: THE BRITISH TOURS 1963–1966
(HIP-O)
✪✪✪✪
This disc of previously unreleased British TV performances captures the blues up close—from the sweat dripping off Howlin' Wolf's brow to the infectious hand claps of Muddy Waters to the facial and body contortions of Junior Wells. Watching the scorching performances, it's easy to see why these 12-bar greats inspired the likes of the Rolling Stones and Led Zeppelin.

DINOSAUR JR
LIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST
(IMAGE)
✪✪✪
The animosity that led to the breakup of Dinosaur's original lineup in the '80s isn't on display on this live DVD, filmed during their 2005 reunion tour. But they aren't exactly hugging it out either—onstage, the bandmates rarely acknowledge one another. But who needs interpersonal warmth when your feedback attack still whines like the bastard offspring of Jimi Hendrix and Greg Ginn?

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BLENDER SESSIONS:ATL SHOWS OFF AT&T'S LATEST PRODUCTS

GUEST LIST

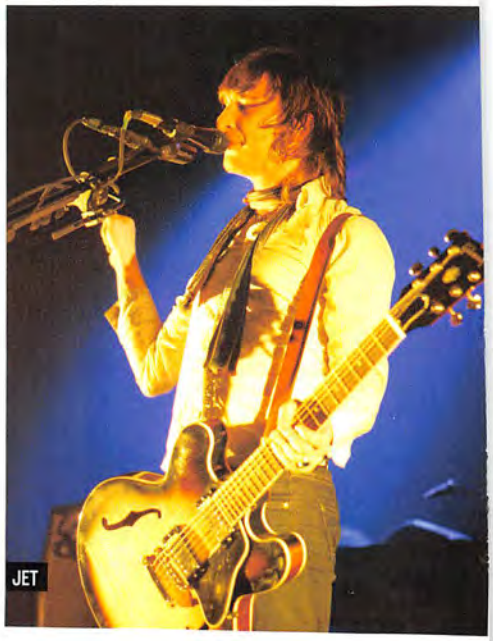
CONTESTS, EVENTS AND OTHER FUN STUFF WE THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

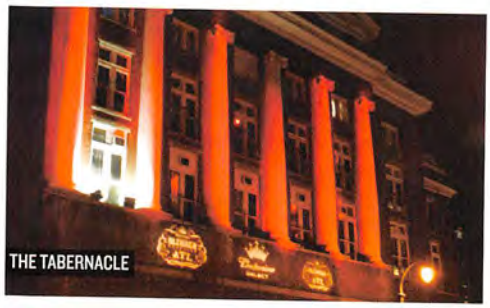
BLENDER SESSIONS ATL

THE EXCITEMENT surrounding the college basketball championship weekend in Atlanta wasn't just courtside this spring, as *Blender* and cosponsors **AT&T**, **Bud Select** and **Old Spice** made a slam dunk at **BLENDER SESSIONS:ATL**, a free, four-night live-music concert series featuring today's hottest acts. More than 2,600 guests packed the TABERNACLE in Atlanta from March 28th through April 1st to experience live performances by **Ne-Yo**, **T.I.**, **Daughtry** and **Jet**.

VIP guests of *Blender*, **AT&T** and **Bud Select** took in the shows then partied in the AT&T branded VIP rooms where they were treated to complimentary ice-cold **Bud Select**, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.

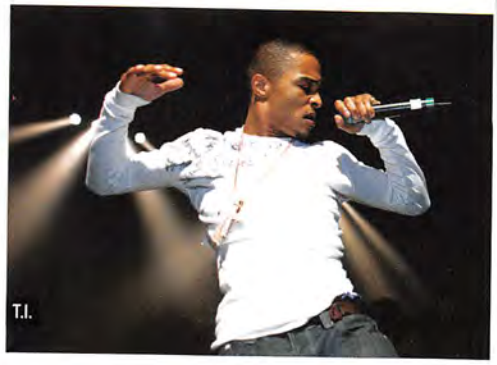
In addition to the nightly live-music performances, The **AT&T** "Text-to-Screen" program enabled guests to text their "show commentary" to large screens each night. Gorgeous Blender Sessions: ATL girls distributed copies of Blender, samples of Stride gum, Old Spice T-shirts and cards, as well as signature bling necklaces and temporary tattoos to guests at the door.

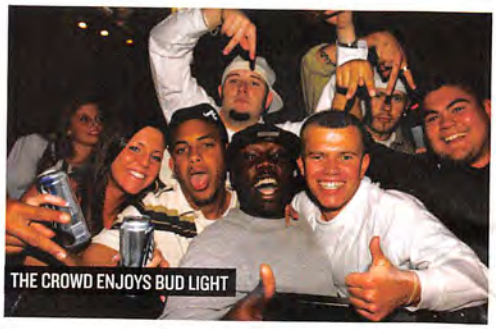

JET


THE TABERNACLE

NE-YO

DAUGHTRY


T.I.


THE CROWD ENJOYS BUD LIGHT

Digital Jessica Alba summons the power to plant filthy thoughts in adolescent-gamers' minds.

FOUR PLAY

The Fantastic Four fight for truth, justice and the simple pleasure of clobberin' bad guys (BY LIBE GOAD)

FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER

2K GAMES: XBOX 360, PS3

✪✪✪

SUPER-HERO SLUGFEST!

TO PARAPHRASE A certain orange-hued, scaly-skinned mutant, "It's button-mashin' time!" It's not exactly brain surgery blasting through waves of comic-book thugs in this adaptation of the latest *Fantastic Four* flick, but the game packs the same visceral thrills as a good summer blockbuster. It's not lonely work, either: Up to four can play at once, with the computer controlling any unmanned characters.

Take advantage of the special skills of Mr. Fantastic, Invisible Woman, Human Torch and Thing to get through levels unharmed. Teamwork counts, as using multiple characters together can unleash combo moves that deliver big damage to enemies. Pulling off these tricks can be fun, but it's too easy to fall back on repeating the most effective moves.

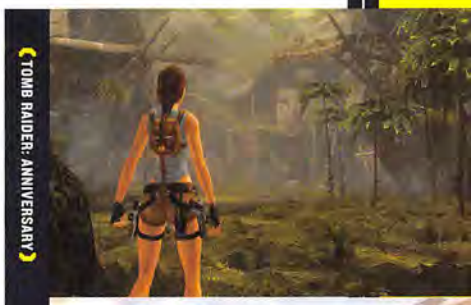
If all this seems as familiar as Mr. Fantastic's spandex undershorts, that's because apart from the movie-inspired characters and story line, *Fantastic Four* is not much different from superhero games like *Marvel: Ultimate Alliance* and *X-Men Legends*, both four-player arcade-style brawlers that just about anyone can pick up and play. *Fantastic Four* lacks the nonlinear story lines and freedom to roam that make the recent *Spider-Man 3* game so great. For what it's worth, *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* is the summer's second-best comic-to-movie-to-game translation.

GIZMO OF THE MONTH

NOVINT FALCON

Truly feel your enemy's wrath with this vibrating supercontroller

PC gamers haven't had much in the way of new gear to get excited about since the invention of the scrolling mouse wheel. Enter the Novint Falcon, a mouse replacement that lets players feel their virtual environment. Grab the Falcon's orb-shaped handle to experience vibrations that mimic the texture of a stone wall, the viscosity of mud or the recoil of a rocket launcher in a way that no puny vibrating controller could ever hope to. But this Falcon doesn't fly cheap—the gizmo, plus a pack of 24 "touch-enabled" minigames like table tennis, fishing, bowling and golf, will set you back $239. Then again, blasting monsters in *Half-Life 2* (currently the only name-brand game that supports the Falcon) has never felt more disturbingly real.



TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

HALO 2

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

EIDOS: PS2, PSP

✪✪✪

Gaming's least-convincing archaologist, Lara Croft, celebrates her 10th anniversary as a digital sex symbol (one year late) with this remake of the original *Tomb Raider*. The new version re-creates many of the classic PS1 game's cinematic set pieces, updating the game play and graphics for modern tastes. Yes, that means Lara is endowed with more polygons where they count.

HALO 2

MICROSOFT: PC

✪✪✪✪½

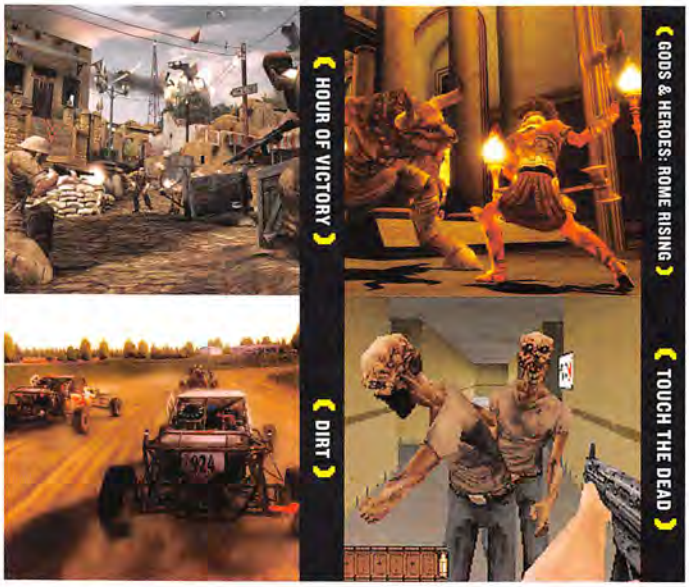
PC gamers have waited more than two years for a chance to play the hit Xbox game *Halo 2* on their computers, but it was well worth it. Retooled for today's high-powered PCs, the sci-fi run-and-gun classic boasts seriously upgraded graphics and a highly responsive keyboard-and-mouse control scheme that no game pad can touch. But be warned: The game runs only on Windows Vista. Curse you, Bill Gates!

HOUR OF VICTORY

MIDWAY: XBOX 360

✪✪

As if *Call of Duty*, *Medal of Honor* et al weren't enough, along comes another WWII shooter, this one set in Europe and North Africa. Unfortunately, *Hour of Victory* falls far short of its illustrious predecessors: Only the ability to switch between characters at preset spots on the map keeps this game from feeling like a third-rate History Channel repeat. >>



DIRT

CODEMASTERS; XBOX 360, PS3, PC

✪✪✪

Rally racing games, in which cars compete against the clock instead of each other, can be a bit of a snore for adrenaline-addicted gamers. *DiRT* manages to solve that problem, adding fun new multicar off-road events. Players can kick up dirt and mud in any of 45 cars and trucks on a total of 55 tracks, from dangerous cliff sides to twisting forest roads. Sadly, there's no head-to-head play and only a meager online component.

GODS & HEROES: ROME RISING

SOE; PC

✪✪✪

Custom create a muscle-bound hero and let loose on gorgons, minotaurs and other enemies of a fictionalized Roman Empire in this massive multiplayer online game for the sword-and-sandal set. The fun of teaming up with your fellow players and recruiting computer-controlled minions for backup is dampened by the game's complex god-worship system that determines which spells and powers will be at your disposal.

TOUCH THE DEAD

EIDOS; NINTENDO DS

✪✪✪

Conventional wisdom holds that the best way to "kill" zombies is by shooting them in the melon. But in this fast-paced handheld game, players do the deed by frantically stabbing the undead in the head and torso with the DS stylus. *Touch the Dead* is good, mindless fun for a while, though the game's undistinguished zombie hordes could definitely use a little more spring in their shuffle.

BLENDER APPROVED

The best games from the past months

SPIDER-MAN 3

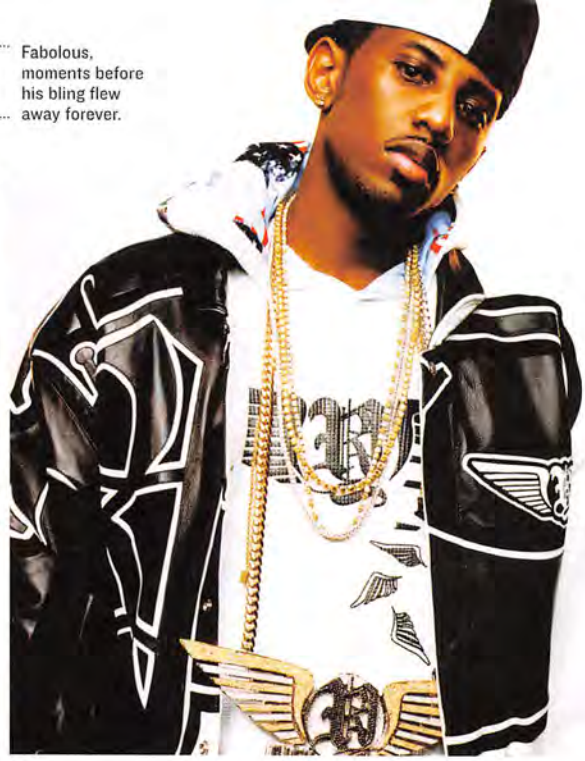
ACTIVISION; XBOX 360, PS3

When Spidey's suit turns black, manners no longer apply.

EARTH DEFENSE FORCE 2017

D3; XBOX 360

Giant bugs are the opening act for Earth-invading aliens and robots.



Fabolous, moments before his bling flew away forever.

GEEK FILES

This month, Brooklyn rapper FABOLOUS proudly lets his dweeb flag fly

Current system of choice

PlayStation 2 or 3. I also have some arcade games in my crib. I have *Ms. Pac-Man/Galaga*—the one with two games in one. I also have *OutRun 2*, the sit-down car game where two people can drive against each other, and *Marvel vs. Capcom*.

Favorite classic game

I used to love the James Bond one that they had for PlayStation and Nintendo 64, where the screen was split into four for you and three of your friends. I like being able to kill my friends. I'm a competitive person.

My gaming childhood

My brother and I could go for days playing Nintendo—we'd turn the TV off but leave the game paused and come back and continue from there. The longest I ever played was 10 hours straight. I don't think I went to the bathroom.

A Fabolous game would look like ...

It would show the life of a rapper. Maybe a top-notch groupie comes into your room wanting to have sex, but you don't have a condom. Now, most people on the game would just say, "Fuck it, it's a game." But then after you fuck her, it'd tell you that the groupie has AIDS and you lose your life. It would have a safe-sex moral.

Video-game crushes

When I was a young dude, it was the princess in *Mario Bros*. Now it's the hookers from *Grand Theft Auto*.

Postshow ritual: games or groupies?

I'd always choose groupies. Let's just say it's a happier ending. *Mark Yarm*

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FABOLOUS: JONATHAN MANNION.

ShowMeHeavier.com

The dapper Canadian crooner is secretly a badass—breaking the law weekly, picking unnecessary fights. Tell it to us straight, buddy ...

By Victoria De Silverio * Photograph by Matthew Salacuse

WHO DOES MICHAEL BUBLÉ THINK HE IS?

Why have you drawn yourself as a superhero?
I've always wanted to be one. I had Spider-Man posters on my wall when I was young. I still have them. In the past two days I've watched 12 episodes of *Heroes*. It's great.

What superpower would you want most?
To see through women's clothing.

Like your mom's?
That's really sick; but with great power comes great responsibility.

What did you do last night?
I watched the Vancouver Canucks play in the first game of the playoffs against the Anaheim Ducks. This is really not interesting, is it?

Not really. How about this: It's a typical Friday at 11 P.M. What are you doing?
I am on the couch falling asleep, because, well, I can't tell you why, because it's illegal.

How illegal?
Illegal enough. I'm burned out, usually. I'm not going to tell you more than that. By 11 o'clock, I'm pooped from what I've been doing all day. It makes a lot of things—like eating, sex and TV—more fun.

When was the first time you got drunk?
I was 11, on a fishing boat with my family, eating crabs. I asked my parents if I could have a rum and Coke and they said, "Well, why don't you have as many as you'd like with us?" I puked all night.

If we drug-tested you, what would we find?
You know the answer. It would make up 50 percent of my molecules. You could probably just burn me right now and inhale, and we'd be hungry and everything would be better.

Would there be any *legal* drugs?
I'm on Nexium for heartburn; I use an inhaler for my asthma; and I get cold sores, so I use Denavir. I'm also wearing orthotics in my shoes right now. Seriously. I broke my ankle playing hockey. I'm like a 31-year-old man in an 80-year-old man's body.

If you have asthma, why do you smoke?
Nobody likes a quitter.

What's the worst mistake you ever made?
One time I was singing at a club, and these guys kept booing me, and at the end of the night I asked them to step outside. But they weren't yelling "Boo! Boo!"—they were yelling "Lou! Lou!" because my drummer, Lou Huger, was a buddy of theirs. I felt like a jackass.

Tell us a trade secret.
Be nice to everyone. You never know if the intern will be the next president of your record company.

"Stairway to Heaven" or "Freebird"?
"Stairway to Heaven," without a doubt. What other song do you get 12 minutes to make out with a girl on the dance floor?

Would you ever get plastic surgery?
Maybe a penis reduction.

Do you do your own laundry?
Of course. I don't want people to see my laundry.

Are you a genius?
I'm more like an idiot savant. Like, "Wow, he can count those cards," but totally retarded in other ways. Like Rain Man.

What happens after you die?
I hope I go to heaven in a little rowboat.

What's your tombstone going to say?
FUCK, I TOLD YOU I WAS ILL. [BLENDER]

"I'm a 31-year-old man in an 80-year-old's body."

* Remember: The waiting is the hardest part.

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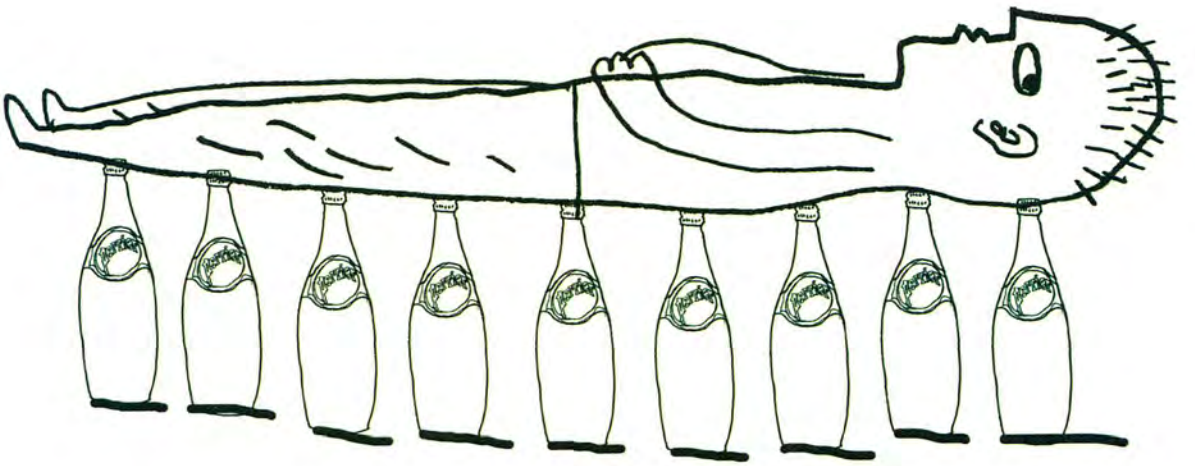

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